



THE BRAILLE MONITOR

Voice of the
National Federation of the Blind

JULY - 1973

The National Federation of the Blind is not an organization speaking for the blind—it is the blind speaking for themselves.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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If you or a friend wish to remember the National Federation of the Blind in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

"I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia non-profit corporation, the sum of \$____(or, "____ percent of my net estate", or "the following stocks and bonds: _____") to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons and to be held and administered by direction of its Executive Committee."

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

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A LEFT-HANDED DISSERTATION:
OPEN LETTER TO A FEDERATIONIST
by

Kenneth Jernigan

DEAR COLLEAGUE: You have asked me to comment on a seeming contradiction in the philosophy of the National Federation of the Blind. You tell me that, on the one hand, we say the ordinary blind person can compete on terms of equality with the ordinary sighted person—if he gets proper training and opportunity. You call to my attention our statement that the average blind person can do the average job in the average place of business, and do it as well as his sighted neighbor. You remind me that we tell the world (with great insistence) that the blind person can be as happy and lead as full a life as anybody else.

You tell me that, on the other hand, we say blindness need not be the great tragedy it has always been considered but that it can be reduced to the level of a mere physical nuisance. You say these two propositions seem contradictory and that, if you are to buy the one, you do not see how you can buy the other. You tell me you are prepared to accept the fact that the blind can compete and, therefore, that you are not prepared (unless I can trot out valid reasons to the contrary) to concede that blindness is a nuisance at all—that is, any more than any other characteristic is a nuisance to any other person in normal living.

Let me begin by saying that you have put me in an unusual position. Ordinarily people want to argue the other way. Most of them say that it is ridiculous to pretend that blindness can be reduced to the level of a nuisance since it is obviously a major

tragedy, involving severe problems and extreme limitations, not to mention emotional distress and psychological disturbance. You, however, deny that it is even a nuisance and ask me to come up to the line and prove that it is. Fair enough. I shall try. The very fact that you can seriously raise such a question shows how much progress we have made. I doubt that anybody could have done it, even as recently as twenty years ago.

To begin with, even if we were to concede (and I don't concede it, as I will shortly indicate) that there is absolutely nothing which can be done with sight which cannot be done just as easily and just as well without it, blindness would still be a nuisance, as the world is now constituted. Why? Because the world is planned and structured for the sighted. This does not mean that blindness need be a terrible tragedy or that the blind are inferior or that they cannot compete on terms of equality with the sighted.

For an exact analogy, consider the situation of those who are left-handed. The world is planned and structured for the right-handed. Thus, left-handedness is a nuisance and is recognized as such, especially by the left-handed. Even so, the left-handed can compete on terms of equality with the right-handed since their handicap can be reduced to the level of a mere physical nuisance.

If you are not left-handed (I am not. I am a "normal."), you may not have thought of the problems. A left-handed person ordinarily wears his wristwatch on his right arm. Not to do so is awkward and causes problems. But the watch is made for the right-handed. Therefore, when it is worn on the right arm, the stem is toward the

elbow, not the fingers. The watch is inconvenient to wind, a veritable nuisance.

Then there are butter knives. Many of them are so constructed that the left-handed must either spread the butter with the back of the knife, awkwardly use the right hand, or turn the wrist in a most uncomfortable way--nuisances all. But not of the sort to ruin one's psyche or cause nightmares, just annoying. The garden variety can opener (the one you grip in your left hand and turn with your right--that is, if you are "normal") is made for "normals." If you hold it in your right hand and turn it with your left (as any respectable left-hander is tempted to do), you must either clumsily reach across it to get at the handle or turn it upside down so that the handle is conveniently located, in which case it won't work at all. Likewise, steak knives are usually serrated to favor the right-handed. Scissors, egg beaters, ice cream dippers, and other utensils are also made for the same group.

So are ordinary school-desk classroom chairs. How many have you seen with the arms on the left side? Of course, a few enlightened schools and colleges (with proper, present-day concern for the well-being of minorities) have two or three left-handed chairs in each of their classrooms, but this is the exception rather than the rule. It succeeds only in earning the ill will of chauvinist right-handers, who must use the desks when the room is full and the left-handed are absent. Of course, these occasional left-handed desks are the most blatant form of tokenism, the groveling gratitude of occasional left-handed Uncle Toms to the contrary notwithstanding.

In at least one case, it would seem, the

problem of the left-handed is not just a side effect of the fact that the world is constructed for the right-handed but a real, inherent weakness. When the left-handed person writes with ink (the ballpoint pen was a blessing, indeed), his hand tends to smear the ink as it drags over what he has written. Of course, he can hold his hand up as he writes, but this is an inferior technique, not to mention being tiresome. Upon closer examination even this apparently inherent weakness is not really inherent at all but simply another problem created by society in its catering to the right-handed. There is no real reason why it is better to begin reading or writing at the left side of the page and move to the right, except that it is more efficient and comfortable for the majority, the right-handed. In fact, it would be just as easy to read or write from the right to the left (more so for the left-handed), and thus the shoe would be on the other foot--or, more precisely, the pen would be in the other hand.

The left-handed have always been considered inferior by the right-handed. Formerly (in primitive times--twenty or thirty years ago) parents tried to make their left-handed children behave normally--that is, use their right hands. Thereby, they often created trauma and psychiatric problems--causing complexes, psychoses, and emotional disturbances. Today (in the age of enlightenment) while parents do not exactly say, "left is beautiful," they recognize the rights of minorities and leave their left-handed progeny to do their own thing.

(Parenthetically, I might say here that those who work with the blind are not always so progressive. Parents--and especially educators--still try to make the

blind child with a little sight read large type, even when Braille would serve him better and be more efficient. They put great stress on reading in the "normal" manner and not being "conspicuous." They make him ashamed of his blindness and often cause permanent damage.)

But back to the left-handed. Regardless of the enlightenment of parents and teachers, the ancient myth of the inferiority of the left-handed still lingers to bedevil the lives of that unfortunate minority. To say that someone has given you a "left-handed compliment" is not a compliment to the left-handed. It is usually the left hand that doesn't know what the right hand is doing, rarely the other way around; and it is the right hand that is raised, or placed on the Bible, to take an oath. Salutes and the Pledge of Allegiance are given with the right hand. Divine Scripture tells us that the good and the evil shall be divided and that, at the day of Judgment, the sheep shall be on the right hand and the goats on the left, from whence they shall be cast into outer darkness forever and ever. The guest of honor sits on the right hand of the host, and in an argument one always wants to be *right*. No one ever wants to be *left* behind. Whether these uses of the words "left" and "right" are subtleties of language—reinforcing the stereotype and bespeaking deeply ingrained, subconscious prejudice—or whether they are accidental, as the "normals" allege, who can say? It may simply be that the left-handed are supersensitive, wearing chips on their shoulders and looking for insult where none is intended.

It is hard to make this case, however, when one considers the word *gauche*. The 1971 edition of *Webster's Third New*

International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged, says: "**gauche** . . . left, on the left, French . . . lacking in social graces or ease, tact, and familiarity with polite usage; likely or inclined to commit social blunders especially from lack of experience or training . . . lacking finish or exhibiting crudity (as of style, form, or technique) . . . being or designed for use with the left hand: **LEFT-HAND**. *Synonym* see **AWKWARD**. **gauchely**, *adverb*: in a *gauche* manner: **AWKWARDLY, CLUMSILY, CRUDELY**."

Whatever else may be said, there is nothing subtle about all of that. Supersensitive? Quibbling? Not on your life. Left-handers, arise. You have nothing to lose but your chains. They probably don't fit you anyway, being made for the right-handed. Look for the new slogans any day: "Left is lovely," and "Get *righty*!"

As with other oppressed minorities, the subtleties of language and prejudice carry over into the job market. I know of a girl, for instance, who lives in Kansas and who sought employment in a factory in that State. She was interviewed and passed every test with flying colors. The prospective employer terminated the interview by telling her, "You are in every way qualified for the job, and I would hire you immediately, except for your handicap." In outrage and indignation she demanded to know what he meant. "Why," he said, "it's obvious! You are left-handed. The machines on our assembly line are made for the right-handed. You would slow down the entire operation." This is not fantasy but fact. The company makes greeting cards. The girl did not get the job.

If, in truth and in fact, the left-handed

girl would have slowed the assembly line, it is hard to see how the action of the employer can be called discriminatory. He could not be expected to buy new machinery simply to give her a job, nor could he be expected to redesign the entire factory. The "normal" person is right-handed, and it is reasonable for the factory to be designed accordingly.

Or does all of this miss the whole point? Is this not exactly the way employers and the general public think and talk about the blind? How did he know she was less efficient? Perhaps she had alternative techniques. Perhaps, in fact, she could have done the job better than most of the other people he had on the line. He decided (based on what he doubtless called "obvious" and "common sense" reasons) that she couldn't do the work. Accordingly, she was never even given the opportunity to try. Beware the "obvious," and look very carefully at so-called "common sense."

Do you still say there is no discrimination against the left-handed? Probably you do—unless you begin to think about it, until you get the facts—and even then, some people will say you are quibbling, that you are exaggerating. How very like the case of the blind. How easy to make quick judgments and have all of the answers, especially when you are not confronted with the problem or compelled to look at reality.

From all of this, you can see that the life of the left-hander is not easy. Nevertheless, his infirmity can be reduced to the level of a mere nuisance. It need not mean helplessness or inferiority. It does not necessarily cripple him psychologically. With reasonable opportunity he can

compete on terms of equality with his right-handed neighbor. The average left-hander can do the average job in the average place of business and do it as well as the average right-hander.

So far as I can tell, there is no inherent weakness in left-handedness at all. The problems arise from the fact that society is structured for the right-handed. But these problems (annoying though they be) do not keep the left-handed from leading normal lives or competing with others. They are at the nuisance level.

Therefore, even if blindness (like left-handedness) had no inherent problems, it would still be a nuisance since society is structured and planned for the sighted—sometimes when it could be arranged more efficiently otherwise. For instance, most windows in modern buildings are not there for ventilation. They are sealed. They are there only so that the sighted may look out of them. The building loses heat in winter and coolness in summer, but the sighted (the majority) will have their windows.

I think, however, that blindness is not exactly like left-handedness. I think there are some things that are inherently easier to do with sight than without it. For instance, you can glance down the street and see who is coming. You can look across a crowded room and tell who is there.

But here, it seems to me, most people go astray. They assume that, because you cannot look across the room and see who is there or enjoy the sunset or look down the street and recognize a friend, you are confronted with a major tragedy—that you are psychologically crippled, sociologically inferior, and economically unable to

compete. Regardless of the words they use, they feel (deep down at the gut level) that the blind are necessarily less fortunate than the sighted. They think that blindness means lack of ability. Such views are held not only by most of the sighted but by many of the blind as well. They are also held by many, if not most, of the professionals in the field of work with the blind. In the *Journal of Rehabilitation* for January-February 1966, an article appeared entitled: "Social Isolation of the Blind: An Underrated Aspect of Disability and Dependency." This article was written by none other than Dr. D. C. MacFarland, Chief of the Office for the Blind, Social and Rehabilitation Service, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Dr. MacFarland says:

"Let me repeat a statement which I violently oppose. There is a slowly evolving fiction which can be summed up in the generalization, 'Blindness is a mere inconvenience.' I do not agree with this, and I do not know what to call such exaggeration in reverse. I think it has done its share of harm, throwing some very well-intentioned people off the track about what blindness really amounts to in people's lives."

It seems to me that Dr. MacFarland is as far off the track as the people who contend that blindness is not even important enough to be considered a nuisance. I think it would be pleasant to look at a sunset. I think it would be helpful to look across a room and see who is there, or glance down the street and recognize a friend. But I know that these things are peripheral to the major concerns of life. It is true that it is sometimes a nuisance to devise alternative techniques to get the same results I could have without effort if I were sighted, but it

is just that (a nuisance), not a tragedy or a psychological crisis or an international incident.

It seems to me that many of the problems which are regarded as inherent in blindness are more like those of the left-handed—in other words, created as a natural side effect of the structuring of society for the sighted. It seems to me that the remaining problems (those that are truly indigenous to blindness) are usually vastly overrated and overdramatized.

Blindness can, indeed, be a tragedy and a veritable hell, but this is not because of the blindness or anything inherent in it. It is because of what people have thought about blindness and because of the deprivations and the denials which result. It is because of the destructive myths which have existed from the time of the caveman—myths which have equated eyesight with ability, and light with intelligence and purity. It is because the blind, being part of the general culture, have tended to accept the public attitudes and thus have done much to make those attitudes reality.

As far as I am concerned, all that I have been saying is tied up with the why and wherefore of the National Federation of the Blind. If our principal problem is the physical fact of blindness, I think there is little purpose in organizing. However, the real problem is not the blindness but the mistaken attitudes about it. These attitudes can be changed, and we are changing them. The sighted can also change. They can be shown that we are in no way inferior to them and that the old ideas were wrong—that we are able to compete with the sighted, play with the sighted, work with the sighted, and live with the sighted

on terms of complete equality. We the blind can also come to recognize these truths, and we can live by them.

For all these reasons I say to you that the blind are able to compete on terms of absolute equality with the sighted, but I go on to say that blindness (even when properly dealt with) is still a physical nuisance. We must avoid the sin and the fallacy of either extreme. Blindness need not be a tragic hell. It cannot be a total nullity, lacking all inconvenience. It can, as we have so often said, be reduced to the level of a mere annoyance. Right on! And let us neither cop out by selling ourselves short with self-pity and myths of tragic deprivation, nor lie to ourselves by denying the existence of a problem. There is no place in our movement for the philosophy of the self-effacing Uncle Tom, but there is also no place for unreasonable and unrealistic belligerence. We are not out to "get sighty."

INCREASING TEMPO ON NAC

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED,
New York, New York, April 13, 1973.

Mr. KENNETH JERNIGAN,
*President, National Federation of the Blind,
Des Moines, Iowa.*

DEAR KEN: A mutual friend (not connected in any way with NAC) has suggested that it might be worthwhile for you and me—the two of us—to get together and have an informal talk. The hope is that perhaps we might be able to arrive at some kind of an understanding that would help

with the relationship between NFB and NAC. Whatever the outcome of such a get-together, I would be pleased to meet with you sometime, at our mutual convenience.

Perhaps just before or just after the meeting of the SRS Committee on Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped might be a possible time. I know that Doug MacFarland is working to clear dates with the Administration and the committee for sometime around early June. I think these dates should be cleared very soon. Otherwise I would be agreeable to meet with you at some convenient spot which we could easily arrive at by telephone conversation.

At this point there should not be any formal agenda. I thought we might both let down whatever is left of our collective hair.

Looking forward toward a better approach to our mutual problems, I am,

Cordially,

PETER J. SALMON,
President.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Des Moines, Iowa, April 24, 1973.

Dr. PETER J. SALMON,
*President, National Accreditation Council
for Agencies Serving the Blind
and Visually Handicapped,
New York, New York.*

DEAR PETER: On March 12, 1973, I wrote to you pointing out that you had not replied to my January 22, 1973, letter. I

also asked you to tell me forthwith the exact time and place of the NAC meeting this summer. For a month I received no answer. Under date of April 13, 1973, I received a letter from you suggesting that you and I (the two of us) meet privately to discuss mutual problems. You did not respond to any of my earlier questions, and you did not tell me the time and place of the NAC meeting this summer.

I do not like closed-door meetings, and I doubt that very much can be accomplished by secret talks between the two of us. However, I am willing to hold such talks if you think they will serve a useful purpose. I would prefer a meeting consisting, on the one hand, of you and two or three other top NAC officials and, on the other hand, me and two or three other leaders of the organized blind movement. I would suggest that such a meeting be held in Chicago at the earliest possible moment. A weekend would probably be better, but I would do the best that I could to fit my schedule to your convenience.

What the National Federation of the Blind wants from NAC is fairly simple and well known:

(1) At least one-third of the members of the NAC Board should be consumer representatives. This does not mean that they should just be blind people. It does not mean puppets or members of company unions. It means exactly what it says—"consumer representatives." It means people elected by and responsible to large representative organizations of the blind. In this country (at this stage in history and as the facts of life now are) it means that most of these representatives would have to come from the National Federation of the Blind.

The Federation is admittedly the largest organization of blind people in this country. It probably has twenty to thirty times as many members as the American Council of the Blind, which is the only other group in the Nation that even pretends to be a general-membership national organization of the blind. Matters are further complicated by the fact that the ACB is widely regarded as nothing but a company union. The Blind Veterans Association is small, limited to a particular classification of blind persons, and has many members who are also members of the Federation. The problem of true consumer representation simply must be dealt with by NAC—with no flimflam, no double talk, and no attempt at evasion. Once the problem is faced, it can probably be solved with relatively little pain or difficulty. The difficulty is that (like the colonial powers of the early twentieth century) NAC has never been willing to recognize the inevitable and try to find solutions. It has insisted on spending its time denying, name calling, and fighting.

(2) When a local agency seeks accreditation, the blind of the area must have a say in the matter. A vehicle must be developed for systematic input from the blind. How do they feel about the agency's performance? What kind of job do they think it is doing?

(3) The NAC "standards" must be reviewed with the organized blind, and those agencies already accredited must be considered in light of that review. Some of the agencies accredited by NAC are widely regarded by the blind throughout the country as being among the poorest in the Nation. It is felt that some of these agencies may have been helped in their accreditation by the fact that people

associated with them have membership on the NAC Board. Questions such as the following must be considered in the context of accreditation: (a) If it is a sheltered workshop, does it pay at least the minimum wage? (b) What mechanism has the agency established to secure consumer input and participation in development of policies? (c) What kind of image of blindness does the agency present to the public? (d) Does the agency attempt to control the lives of the blind with whom it deals? (e) Does the agency really perform a service that the blind regard as beneficial?

(4) All NAC meetings must be completely open, and the time and place of such meetings should be well publicized in advance. Reasonable numbers of observers should be admitted as a matter of right. This policy should apply not only to board meetings but to meetings of committees and subcommittees. NAC should operate entirely in the open.

(5) A reasonable amount of time should be set aside at each NAC Board meeting for discussion of items which the organized blind might wish to present. If the board meeting is to last for an entire day or longer, at least an hour should be allocated for this purpose.

(6) NAC must accept the principle that it has responsibility not only to the agencies in the field but to the blind as well. It must change the thrust and tone of its operation to conform to the needs and demands of a consumer-oriented society. It must recognize the fact that the blind are not wards but full-fledged citizens, who intend to have a major voice in determining

their own destiny.

Peter, these are the things I would like to discuss with you if you care to meet with me. We are not dealing with a petty little personal controversy—one which can be settled by shaking hands and “being friends.” I keep hearing reports that the NAC people answer every charge by attacking me as an individual and talking about my motives. It does not matter what my motives are or how I feel as an individual. Likewise, it does not really matter what your motives are or how you feel. The issues I have raised with you are vital to the lives of blind people in this country, and they must be settled in that context.

Under the circumstances I leave it to you as to the kind of meeting you wish to hold with the representatives of the organized blind movement. My earlier statements to you on the subject still stand. Regardless of that, I again officially ask you to tell me (and remember you are making a record) the precise time and place of the next NAC meeting. I also ask you to tell me whether observers from the National Federation of the Blind will be admitted to the meeting. I ask you to send me this information at once so that I may plan accordingly. I shall send this letter by registered mail to establish the fact of your receiving it. Please let me have your answer as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President,
National Federation of the Blind.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Des Moines, Iowa, May 11, 1973.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN: For over a year the blind of this Nation have been urging the Members of Congress to investigate the activities of the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC). We have offered evidence to show that NAC is undemocratic; that it operates in secret, excluding representatives of the blind from participation; and that (in the name of making things better for the blind) it is hurting and damaging to us. As we have repeatedly pointed out, the problem is compounded by the fact that over a half million dollars of HEW money has been given to NAC during the past few years.

As a result of our inquiries and urgings, many Congressmen and Senators have asked questions. They have been repeatedly assured by HEW and NAC officials that NAC does not operate in secret and that its meetings are open to observers on a reasonable basis.

For example: Under date of February 13, 1973, Mr. William Usdane, Assistant Commissioner for Program Development, Social and Rehabilitation Service, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, wrote to Congressman Barry Goldwater: NAC "Board meetings are open to observers, and consumer representatives attended the winter meeting in December."

Mr. John Twiname, Administrator, Social and Rehabilitation Service, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, wrote to Congressman Thomas E. Morgan, under date of December 21, 1972: "You will be glad to note from the enclosed

correspondence that NAC has confirmed its commitment to open its board meetings to observers. We have learned that representatives from the National Federation of the Blind did attend the meeting December 10 and 11."

Likewise Mr. Elliot Richardson gave assurances to Senator Lawton Chiles. Acting on these assurances, Senator Chiles wrote me under date of January 17, 1973: "It appears that your involvement in this area has already produced tangible results, in that meetings have now become open and representation has been expanded."

The problem is that NAC had not "opened up" at all. We the blind had considerable problems in learning the time and place of its December, 1972, meeting; and it was with great difficulty that we secured admission of two observers. Blind demonstrators peacefully picketed that meeting, and our observers informed us that the NAC Board voted to hold its next meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, in July. Incidentally, the NAC minutes indicate that the blind demonstrators and observers were courteous and peaceful.

Since January I have written several letters officially asking the president of NAC to tell me when and where the next meeting would be held and whether the blind would be permitted to have observers. He has not answered most of my letters at all, and he has made no response whatever to my questions.

One of the NAC Board members has now given me a letter (copy attached) which shows conclusively how NAC operates and how much reliance can be placed upon its representations. This letter (obviously not meant to fall into the hands of the blind)

says that NAC's executive committee has now changed the time and the place of the NAC Board meeting. They have moved it from July to the 20th and the 21st of June. These dates fall on a Wednesday and Thursday, a time when many of us would presumably be working and could not come. Further, the place is not to be downtown Cleveland, where we might hope to move freely and inform the public of the nature of NAC. Instead, the meeting is to be held at the O'Hare Inn at the airport in Chicago. Finally the NAC officials presumably felt that we might not learn of their change of plans until it was too late for us to show up. Of course, they are mistaken. We will be there, whether they admit our observers or not.

Under date of March 27, 1973, Congressman Phillip Burton wrote to NAC as follows:

March 27, 1973.

PETER J. SALMON,
*President, National Accreditation
Council for Agencies Serving the
Blind and Visually Handicapped,
New York, New York.*

DEAR MR. SALMON: Several weeks ago I wrote to you asking that you notify me when and where meetings of the board of directors of the National Accreditation Council were to take place.

I understand a meeting is scheduled for some time in July for somewhere in the Midwest.

Again, I ask that you tell me the time and place of this meeting and other future meetings of the board.

Since Federal funds are being used to support NAC, I believe I, as a Congressman, have a right to know of NAC meetings so that I or my staff may attend, if we so choose.

Yours truly,

PHILLIP BURTON,
Member of Congress.

As President of the National Federation of the Blind I now appeal to the Members of Congress to help us. We the blind feel that NAC is damaging our chances to lead full and independent lives. It receives a great deal of its funding from our Federal tax dollars. Its leaders and the officials of HEW have attempted to mislead Congress as to the nature of NAC. NAC continues to exclude us and to attack our leaders with the worst kind of vilification, answering every charge with name calling. Despite its statements to the contrary, NAC still operates in secret. It will not talk with our representatives, and it apparently will not even give information about the time and place of its meetings to Members of Congress—all of this while still receiving Federal funds.

Is there no way we can find relief? Is there no way NAC can be made to be responsible in its actions and responsive to the needs of the blind? Please give this matter consideration, and do what you can to see that justice is done. If we cannot turn to our Congressmen and Senators for help, then where can we go?

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
*President,
National Federation of the Blind.*

P.S.—I add this postscript to tell you of a

new development which compounds NAC's offenses. By their own statement, NAC's executive committee acted on April 25, 1973, to change their meeting from Cleveland to Chicago. However, they did not send letters to inform their own board members of the change until early in May, delaying as long as they apparently thought they dared. They waited still longer to inform the National Federation of the Blind. Today (May 15) I received a letter from NAC's president telling me of the change. Thus, NAC's leadership apparently thought they could have it both ways—that is, that they could violate actions of their own board last December and change the meeting of NAC so as to avoid demonstrations and confrontation and, at the same time, technically be able to claim that they had been open and aboveboard and had informed the National Federation of the Blind of what they were doing. It won't wash. Ever since January we have been repeatedly asking NAC officially to tell us when and where they would meet and whether we might send observers. Their mid-May letter (coming at such a late hour and under such circumstances) in no way mitigates NAC's shabby conduct. In fact, we will be in Chicago to meet them when they arrive, and no flimflam or pretense can alter the record of what has occurred.

K.J.

Encl.

cc: Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary
Department of Health, Education,
and Welfare

James Dwight, Administrator
Social and Rehabilitation Service

Corbett Reedy, Acting Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services
Administration

Douglas C. MacFarland
Office of the Blind and Visually
Handicapped

Board of Directors
National Accreditation Council

Alexander Handel, Executive Director
National Accreditation Council

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED
New York, New York

May 3, 1973

To: Members of the Board of Directors
From: Alexander F. Handel, Executive
Director
Re: Change of Dates of Forthcoming
Annual Meeting of Members and of
the Board of Directors, to June
20-21, 1973, O'Hare Inn, Chicago

At the meeting of the Council's executive committee on April 25, the dates of the above meeting were changed as noted above.

The O'Hare Inn, which is easily accessible by courtesy car from O'Hare Airport, will be the location for our summer membership meeting and awards dinner on June 20, to be followed the next day by the semiannual meeting of the board.

Please mark your calendar for these important dates.

Further information about reservations for lodgings and the awards dinner will be sent to you shortly. Materials to be

included on the agenda of the meetings will follow at a later date.

We look forward to seeing you at these meetings on June 20-21, 1973.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Des Moines, Iowa, May 23, 1973.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN: On May 11, 1973, I sent to you a letter concerning the change of date and place of the meeting of the board of the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC). The president of NAC, Peter Salmon, has now replied to my many communications about the meeting and other matters concerning the relationship of the National Federation of the Blind to NAC. Mr. Salmon's letter to me, dated May 11, and my reply to him, dated May 15, are being sent to you so that you may be informed of these subsequent and supplemental developments.

Sincerely yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President,
National Federation of the Blind.

Encls.

[Note.—Copies of this letter and its enclosures were sent to the people listed at the end of President Jernigan's May 11 letter to Congress.]

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED,
New York, New York, May 11, 1973.

Mr. KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President, National Federation of the Blind,
Des Moines, Iowa.

DEAR KEN: Thank you for your letter of April 24.

Our executive committee has now set the time and place of our annual meeting. It will be held on Wednesday, June 20, at the O'Hare Inn, Des Plaines, Illinois (five minutes from Chicago's O'Hare Airport).

The afternoon session will begin at 2:00 p.m. and is expected to break no later than 4:30 p.m. From 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. there will be a reception, followed by the annual NAC award dinner, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Enclosed is a reservation form for the dinner, which should be returned to this office not later than June 11.

In view of the other matters mentioned in your letter, I feel it might be helpful to establish certain facts before you and I proceed with plans for a meeting. Let's consider these facts in relation to your statements of "what the National Federation of the Blind wants from NAC."

1. You state that at least one-third of the members of NAC's board should be "people elected by and responsible to large representative organizations of the blind."

The fact is that NAC is a chartered corporation of which the board members are legally elected directors. In accordance with our charter, the directors are responsible to NAC's legal constituency for

seeing that NAC is managed so as to carry out its stated chartered purposes and that its funds are properly accounted for. A director or group of directors who were elected by, accountable to, and subject to recall by some outside corporation or organization would not be NAC directors. Under our charter, duly elected NAC directors could not abrogate their responsibilities to such persons. There is a great difference between having on NAC's board blind persons who have first-hand experience with the services of agencies and schools for the blind and blind persons "elected" by some group other than the duly constituted electors. We shall continue to involve numbers of blind persons on NAC's board in the former capacity.

2. The fact is that we have long been concerned about the development of a vehicle to make possible systematic input of blind individuals when a local agency is seeking accreditation. We have taken steps toward the development of such a vehicle and are setting up a roster of blind persons across the country to contribute to the development of this and other aspects of NAC's program. We had expected to discuss these matters at the meeting in January to which we invited you to send representatives. You will recall that you did not accept our invitation but suggested another kind of meeting which did not seem appropriate at that time.

We should be glad to have your suggestions at any time for persons who might be added to the roster.

3. The fact is that NAC welcomes comments and suggestions on its standards. We receive and have utilized such suggestions even in advance of a comprehensive review of the standards.

There is not now and never has been anything to prevent the organized blind from reviewing NAC standards and transmitting to us their specific suggestions for changes. To help make this possible, the COMSTAC Report which contains the standards is available in Braille and on records in the regional libraries associated with the Library of Congress. The Braille edition which was available for sale is sold out, which would indicate that a number of blind persons are familiar with it.

We urge persons who inquire about the standards to read them and let us have their reaction.

In reading the standards, you will find many that are pertinent to the points you raise on page three of your letter. Having read them, you may wish to suggest specific changes that you believe would strengthen and improve them.

We hope that all the professional workers for the blind who are members of NFB will want to make a professional contribution to the field by transmitting to us their specific proposals. It would also be productive if you encouraged members of your organization to share their experience and results of research with all concerned, through the many professional journals in the field.

As you know, the standards were developed under the aegis of the national Commission of Standards and Accreditation of Services for the Blind (COMSTAC) which consisted of blind and sighted leaders in government, education, social services, and business, as well as professionals in work for the blind. COMSTAC in turn involved about two thousand other persons through its task

forces, meetings of the American Association of Workers for the Blind, and the national conference on standards, convened by COMSTAC itself.

The COMSTAC Report is the result of the input of these diverse groups and individuals.

Here are some examples related to the points you enumerated.

Your point (a): If it is a sheltered workshop, does it pay at least the minimum wage?

The COMSTAC Report, page 296, standard 2.10, "Wage Scales," reads:

The workshop pays wage rates commensurate with those paid for similar types and amounts of work by local commercial and industrial establishments maintaining approved labor standards.

Your point (b): What mechanism has the agency established to secure consumer input and participation in development of policies?

The COMSTAC Report, page fifty-three, standard 2.6.2, reads:

Provision is made for the constitution of an advisory group or committee, made up of recipients or potential recipients of agency service, who can be of assistance in formulating policies which affect the well-being of the agency's clients.

On page 155, standard 1.4.3 reads:

Effective communication is maintained

with all persons served by the agency (clients, workshop employees, trainees, et cetera) concerning pertinent policies and program developments.

And on the same page, standard 1.5.3 states:

The agency makes conscious efforts to develop relationships with such specific groups as clients and their families, contributors, government bodies, community planning councils, organizations of blind persons, educators, ophthalmologists, and other community agencies.

Your point (c): What kind of image of blindness does the agency present to the public?

The COMSTAC Report, page fifty, standard 1.7.3, states:

The agency conducts and promotes educational programs designed to combat prejudice and discrimination directed at blind persons.

Also, on page 155, standard 1.2.3, "Ethics," states:

The dignity of the client is preserved. References made to blind persons and to the field of blindness are within the bounds of good taste and reflect a positive and constructive viewpoint. Blind persons are not portrayed as universally helpless and dependent.

Your point (d): Does the agency attempt to control the lives of the blind with whom it deals?

The COMSTAC Report, introduction to

the standards for social work, sets the approach, stating:

Social work rests on a set of ethical principles which guide practice. Foremost among these are belief in the dignity and worth of human beings, respect for individual differences, and belief in the right of each person to determine direction and goals for himself.

Your point (e): Does the agency really perform a service that the blind regard as beneficial?

The COMSTAC Report, page forty-eight, standard 1.3.2, states:

The degree and manner in which the services are used by blind and visually handicapped persons constitute a measure of the need for and validity of the services rendered.

Also, on page forty-nine, standards 1.6.2 and 1.6.2.1 state:

Clients who take exception to the decision of a staff member have the right and are given the opportunity to appeal such decision. The agency makes provision for an impartial board to hear such appeals.

The quotations I have cited are not the only standards that bear on the points you have made but I believe they indicate that the more than two thousand blind and sighted persons who helped develop and review the standards before they were published were deeply concerned about exactly the points you now raise.

There undoubtedly are many ways in

which the standards can and will be clarified and strengthened. We solicit ideas and suggestions that will improve them.

You also state that NAC standards "must be reviewed with the organized blind, and those agencies already accredited must be considered in the light of that review."

The fact is that all accredited agencies are subject to review for reaccreditation and we are working on ways to involve, in a meaningful manner, the various groups—including the organized blind—that have input for the reaccreditation procedure.

So far as objections to the currently accredited agencies are concerned, the fact is that the Commission on Accreditation will consider at any time specific documented requests for the review of the accreditation of any NAC-accredited agency.

4. Regarding your statement that observers (that is, persons not members of NAC's constituency) should be admitted "as a matter of right" to *all* NAC meetings.

The effectiveness of NAC in stimulating agencies to improve their services to the blind, and thereby qualify for accreditation, depends in part on the agencies' awareness that NAC can be trusted to keep confidential material—submitted in the course of qualifying—confidential. There are many occasions when open meetings are proper and desirable. There are other occasions when it would be in violation of professional and public ethics to hold an open meeting about confidential matters. There can be no simplistic rule which covers all occasions and every sort of

meeting.

It may be worth noting that, in the matter of public disclosure, the standards call for and NAC follows the practice of publishing annually a comprehensive financial report. I am not aware that this is the practice of the National Federation of the Blind.

5. Regarding your statement that "a reasonable amount of time should be set aside at each NAC Board meeting for discussion of items which the organized blind might wish to present."

The fact is that a resolution adopted at the June 1972 board meeting states that: "...every reasonable consideration be given to requests for special-purpose appearances at or presentations to meetings of the directors of the National Accreditation Council."

It is clear that NAC is prepared to set aside time for discussion of items which the organized blind or others might wish to present. To enable the board to transact business in an orderly and expeditious manner, all persons having business with the board are asked to indicate in advance the nature of the item they would like to present and the approximate time that would be required, so we may be able to plan the board agenda.

6. Regarding your last statement, the fact is that NAC was founded to help insure that blind people should not be wards but full-fledged citizens. The standards and the system of accreditation are designed to achieve this purpose by improving agency operations and services. For example, the COMSTAC Report, page thirty-five, states: "Because a person is

blind and needs specialized services, he is not necessarily dependent, seeking special privileges or unable to provide for his own needs."

On page forty-six, it states:

The practical effect of full participation in the total effort by agencies serving the blind and visually handicapped is to decrease the segregation of the blind by providing them with wider access to agencies serving the general population. The same factor of interagency cooperation that makes it easier for blind and visually handicapped persons to move into the mainstream of community life has the collateral effect of bringing agencies serving these persons into more active partnership with the community's overall health, welfare, and education efforts.

And one further example, on page forty-nine:

The agency maintains a program of community and public education designed to stimulate realistic attitudes toward and understanding of blind people and to increase their opportunities to participate in general community life.

The fact that any individual or organization may differ as to the effectiveness of the current standards in achieving this goal does not in any way change NAC's purpose. Our aim is to make the standards, and their application, constantly more effective.

Since our organizations are of different kinds but have the same purpose, I can only repeat what NAC officers have said

before: Let us cooperate to achieve that purpose, each organization doing the work for which it was established and not trying to do each other's work. By doing our own jobs as well as possible and by exchanging constructive criticism and ideas we can make real progress toward our common goal.

On this basis, NAC cooperates with many other organizations and they with NAC. I see no essential reason why NAC and NFB should not cooperate in an atmosphere of mutual respect also. I have found NFB able to cooperate with other groups on legislative matters of common concern. I believe it can cooperate in matters of standards and accreditation methods.

This is certainly "no petty little personal controversy." The blind people of this country don't need to have the strength of their friends divided. On the contrary, there is so much to accomplish that it challenges the best of our united efforts.

This letter has presented a statement of some facts I believe we should both bear in mind. If you are willing to attend an informal meeting of the two of us, I should still be glad to do so. If our meeting is fruitful, we can proceed further.

Incidentally, it is obvious that no meeting of ours would be "secret." The fact that we are meeting would be known and I assume we'd each report to the members of our respective organizations.

Sincerely,

PETER J. SALMON.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Des Moines, Iowa, May 15, 1973.

Dr. PETER J. SALMON,
*President, National Accreditation
Council for Agencies Serving the
Blind and Visually Handicapped,
New York, New York.*

DEAR PETER: Today (May 15, 1973) I received your letter dated May 11, 1973. Like everything else emanating from NAC it bears the stamp of arrogance, condescension, half-truth, and worse. Many of your sentences begin with the words, "the fact is."

Let me reply in kind. The fact is that the fact is different from your sentences beginning with "the fact is." The fact is that, as we find in *Alice in Wonderland*, your letter is "much of a muchness."

Let me show you what I mean: NAC met in June, 1972. Your minutes of that meeting say on page twelve:

Time and Place of Next Annual Meeting
Mr. Cozier extended a cordial invitation to the board to hold the next annual meeting in Cleveland in connection with the biennial national meeting of the American Association of Workers for the Blind.

It was moved by Dr. Haughton, seconded by Mrs. Carlson, that the invitation be accepted. CARRIED

Thus, the NAC Board (supposedly, as we have been told over and over, the governing body of NAC) officially voted to hold its summer 1973 meeting in connection with the meeting of the American Association of

Workers for the Blind in Cleveland, Ohio. The December, 1972, minutes of the NAC Board meeting in New York say on page eight:

Annual Meeting Plans

Mr. Handel reviewed the board action, taken at its previous meeting, to accept the invitation of the American Association of Workers for the Blind (AAWB) to hold our annual meeting in Cleveland in connection with the AAWB biennial. This would make the dates July 21 and 22, 1973. The AAWB will be meeting at the Statler-Hilton Hotel.

This language is clear and unequivocal. NAC's board (the governing body) decreed that the upcoming meeting would be held in Cleveland in July. There is no qualifying language, no statement that final choices will be made by the executive committee.

In the meantime the blind, speaking through the National Federation of the Blind, repeatedly asked to be told officially when and where the next NAC meeting will be held and whether observers will be admitted. NAC's president (you) refused to respond to the question. During these months (from January until the present) NAC is assuring Members of Congress that its meetings are open and aboveboard, not hidden or secret. In April the President of the National Federation of the Blind writes to you to ask once again whether it is not true that NAC will be meeting in Cleveland and to tell you that blind observers and demonstrators will be on hand. On April 25 NAC's executive committee meets and votes (without authority and in direct contravention of NAC Board action) to change the time and place of the meeting.

The NAC meeting is not to be held in downtown Cleveland, where the blind may appear and publicly express their views. Instead, it is to be hidden away at a location close to O'Hare Field in Chicago, where the blind presumably may not be able to find it or have very much of an audience. Further, the meeting is not to be held on a weekend but on a Wednesday and Thursday, at which time perhaps a great number of the blind might be working and unable to come. Finally, although NAC's executive committee acted on April 25, notice of their extraordinary action is delayed. At least one NAC Board member of my acquaintance received his notification of the change during the week of May 7. I live in the same city, and I received a letter from you May 15. Coincidence? Perhaps.

NAC leaders knew that the blind had made extensive plans to appear in Cleveland. Did they think that, by taking such actions and withholding notification, they could diminish or altogether eliminate any confrontation? One would hope not, but the chronology appears suspiciously suspicious—in fact, enough to create suspicion. Is it any wonder, Peter, that people sometimes allege that NAC operates secretly and deviously?

Although I do not intend to discuss your letter point by point, I wish to show you the flimsiness of its rhetoric. I told you that we the organized blind would want to discuss with NAC a number of questions, such as: "If it is a sheltered workshop, does it pay at least the minimum wage?"

On page three of your letter you replied to my question as follows:

The COMSTAC Report, page 296,

standard 2.10, "Wage Scales," reads:

"The workshop pays wage rates commensurate with those paid for similar types and amounts of work by local commercial and industrial establishments maintaining approved labor standards."

Although this language is a little high-flown and jargonized, I believe the average human being reading it would believe that you are saying that the NAC standards require sheltered shops to pay at least the minimum wage. If this is not what you meant and if it is not what the standards meant, then the language is deliberately deceptive, and doubly so when given as a direct answer to my question.

Be it so. Now, what are the facts? NAC has accredited a number of workshops—some of them notorious among the blind as particularly custodial and repressive. They are said to exploit the blind shamelessly. I have not had the time or means to check every workshop you have accredited, but let me give you the results of a very brief exploration:

NAC has accredited the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind. The president of our Illinois affiliate tells me that, on a radio talk-show last week, a blind man called in to say that he had been employed by the Chicago Lighthouse for ten years and that he is currently making \$1.15 per hour. I believe the Chicago Lighthouse admits that they do not pay all their workers the minimum wage.

John Nagle, Chief of the Washington Office of the National Federation of the Blind, called officials of the Maryland Workshop for the Blind, the Columbia

Lighthouse for the Blind, and the Virginia Commission for the Visually Handicapped this week to ask whether they paid all of their workers the minimum wage at all times. He tells me that each of these agencies (and remember they are all accredited by NAC) admitted that they did not. Now, Peter, I ask you to examine your conscience and tell me whether your answer will stand examination in the light of these facts.

The rest of your letter is of similar nature. You say that two thousand people (including many blind people) participated in the formulation of the COMSTAC standards. Peter, I was at Denver in 1965, and I witnessed what occurred. Meaningful participation was simply not permitted. What happened was the grossest kind of arrogance and manipulation. Later in 1965 I was in New York, and again I saw what happened. I saw people turned away who wished to enter meetings. I saw people refused the right to speak—people who were behaving courteously and in no sense disruptively.

The American Foundation for the Blind appointed COMSTAC. COMSTAC appointed NAC. NAC added to its own membership. It determined who would be accredited. Strangely enough, many of the first agencies accredited were those associated with members of the NAC Board.

We are now told that NAC is thoroughly independent and that it has legal and ethical obligations to its constituents—constituents which it elected, not the other way around.

Ah, Peter, Peter, it won't do. You say that the National Federation of the Blind

refused to meet with you in January; but, of course, that is not the way it happened. You say a variety of other fanciful and wondrous things. Most of them didn't happen either.

Let me tell you for the record that I am willing to meet with you on a private, informal basis if you think this will help; but let me also tell you that both your attitudes and your actions contraindicate success at such a meeting. Anyway, I am ready to go. As I have told you before, Peter, time is running out for NAC. The blind will not forever be humble and patient, nor will Congress or the public at large.

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President,
National Federation of the Blind.

P.S.—Your latest letter still does not explicitly tell me whether NFB observers will be admitted to your meeting. If they will, then I would like to appoint two people to be present at every session, including the dinner. From the language of your letter I assume that observers will be admitted, and I certainly do not wish to quibble or stand on niceties; but we have learned from hard experience the danger of taking anything for granted when dealing with NAC. Therefore, please give me a direct answer to my question.

K. J.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED,
New York, New York, May 24, 1973.

Mr. KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President, National Federation of the Blind,
Des Moines, Iowa.

DEAR KEN: Our annual meeting will have two sessions, as I mentioned in my letter—the afternoon session beginning at 2:00 p.m. and the NAC award dinner which will begin at 6:00 p.m. and will be preceded by a reception from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. The 2:00 p.m. session will be held in the West Ballroom, section "C." The reception and dinner will be in the West Ballroom, section "B." We invite interested persons to attend the annual meeting and this would certainly include two observers from NFB.

There is no charge for the afternoon session. Cost of the reception and dinner is seven dollars and I enclose two reservation forms for your observers.

I am still willing, as you say you are, to meet with you informally. It occurs to me that a mutually convenient time might be when we are both in Washington for the meeting of the National Advisory Committee June 4 and 5. I suggest that we have lunch on June 4 at a nearby spot at which I should be pleased to have you as my guest.

Sincerely,

PETER J. SALMON.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Des Moines, Iowa, May 29, 1973.

Dr. PETER J. SALMON,
*President, National Accreditation
Council for Agencies Serving the
Blind and Visually Handicapped.
New York, New York.*

DEAR PETER: This will reply to your letter of May 24, 1973. I herewith enclose a copy of that letter, as well as a copy of your memo to the NAC Board, dated May 3, 1973, and your letter to Congressman Phillip Burton, dated May 11, 1973. I send you these letters because I believe they clearly and convincingly demonstrate a knowing and calculated intent on your part to deceive.

Peter, I know that the annual meeting of NAC (mostly a formality) is open to anyone who cares to attend. For months I have been trying to get you to tell me whether NFB observers will be allowed to attend your board meeting, which is now scheduled for Thursday morning, June 21. You simply refuse to make a direct answer to my questions.

What you have done is to write a letter which the average person would construe as a very genuine, frank, open invitation for observers to attend the NAC proceedings. You very carefully refrain from mentioning your board meeting the following morning—the meeting which is always held in secret behind closed doors—the meeting which is financed in part with Federal tax money. If you try to avoid my charge of deliberate deception by saying that you thought I really meant the “annual meeting” and that I really did not wish to send observers to the secret meeting of the

board, I tell you that the reading of your own letters will not substantiate it.

I herewith return your reception and awards dinner reservation forms, along with a money order for fourteen dollars. Two official observers from the National Federation of the Blind will plan to be on hand for the Wednesday afternoon meeting of NAC, for the reception and dinner, and for the secret board meeting next morning.

Will you or will you not admit them to the board meeting? I send you this letter by registered mail so that there can be no question as to whether you received it. Peter, I have always known that NAC indulged in devious and sharp practices, but I must say that I would not have thought you would have made this latest petty attempt at deception. I tell you directly and to your face that I am ashamed of you. This is one of the mangiest tricks I have ever seen, even from NAC and its president. Read your own letters, and see whether you deserve what I am saying. As the poet has put it: “A man may smile and smile and be a villain.”

Yes, I will meet with you in Washington if you want me to; but after your latest blatant attempt to deceive, you may be ashamed to face me. You certainly should be. Unless I hear from you to the contrary, I shall plan to have lunch with you Monday, June 4.

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
*President,
National Federation of the Blind.*

Encl.

[Note.—Copies of this letter, its enclosure, and the Peter Salmon letter of May 24 to which this letter replies were sent to

Members of Congress and to the persons listed at the end of President Jernigan's May 11 letter to Congress.]

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED,
New York, New York, May 11, 1973.

Hon. PHILLIP BURTON,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. BURTON: You are cordially invited to be the guest of the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped at our annual meeting, June 20, and our board meeting, June 21, at the O'Hare Inn, Des Plaines, Illinois (five minutes from Chicago's O'Hare Airport).

The annual meeting will begin at 2:00 p.m. with a business meeting which will also include a presentation and discussion of new directions in standards and accreditation. We expect this session will conclude at 4:30 p.m. It will be followed by a reception from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. and the annual NAC award dinner, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Miss Marjorie S. Hooper, editor, American Printing House for the Blind, will receive the 1973 NAC Award for a professional lifetime devoted to improving reading materials for the blind and visually handicapped.

We should be pleased to have you attend both sessions. In particular, if you plan to attend the dinner, we hope you will plan to speak briefly on the prospects for the

passage of liberalizing amendments to the Rehabilitation Act during the current year.

Miss Hooper will also make an address.

The board meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 21, and close at 12:30 p.m.

If you will let us know when you expect to arrive, we should be pleased to make a reservation for you at the inn. It would be a great pleasure to have you as our guest and to have you bring us a message at our award dinner.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Cordially,

PETER J. SALMON.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Des Moines, Iowa, June 5, 1973.

JAMES DWIGHT,
Administrator,
Social and Rehabilitation Service,
Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. DWIGHT: For several months the organized blind of this country have been telling Congress and officials of HEW that the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC) is holding secret meetings and excluding the blind from participation, and that NAC is engaging in a number of other undesirable and undemocratic practices—at the same time receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars of Federal tax money through HEW. I now

wish to call to your attention the latest evidence of what we have been saying and to ask that you tell us what HEW can do to help.

NAC (after a great deal of pressure from Members of Congress and the blind) finally admitted two silent observers from the National Federation of the Blind to its December board meeting. Since that time representations have been made repeatedly by officials of HEW to the Congress that NAC is following an "open" policy. Members of Congress have obviously relied on these representations.

Since the first of the year I have asked Dr. Peter Salmon, the president of NAC, several times, and in writing, whether our observers would be admitted to NAC's summer board meeting. He has replied evasively (when he has replied at all). In fact, his latest letter, in my opinion, is deliberately deceptive. Yesterday he told me in the presence of witnesses that the NAC Board had decided that it would hold a closed meeting later this month and would exclude our observers. I reminded him that the NAC Board had taken no such action, as our observers who were present at the last meeting would verify. He then said that the action had been taken by NAC's executive committee. When I pointed out to him that representations had been made to Congress concerning the openness of NAC meetings he simply shrugged the matter off.

This morning I talked with Mr. Corbett Reedy, Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and Dr. D. C. MacFarland, head of the Office for the Blind in RSA. Both said that they would see what they could do about the matter, and Dr. MacFarland (a member of NAC's

own board) told me that he had not known of the plans for a closed board meeting until late last night and that it was a mistake. NAC's actions in this instance are of a piece with everything else they have done—deception, secrecy, and evasion. The supposedly "independent" on-site review team which was to have reported to interested Members of Congress several months ago has still not done so, and its report is a foregone conclusion in view of its makeup and the way it gathered information. The last minute shift of the upcoming NAC meeting from downtown Cleveland to Chicago's O'Hare Inn and from a weekend to a weekday is typical. This was done despite action to the contrary by NAC's own board of directors.

NAC still continues to receive Federal funds from HEW, and it still continues to do damage to the lives of blind people. Is there any way to make this outfit responsive? If not, is there any way to withdraw Federal support from it? We shall appreciate whatever you can do to help us. Surely the Congress (and for that matter, HEW officials) will not forever tolerate this continued hanky-panky on the part of NAC.

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President,

National Federation of the Blind.

[Note.—Copies of this letter were sent to Members of Congress and to the persons listed at the end of President Jernigan's May 11 letter to Congress.]

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Des Moines, Iowa, June 12, 1973.

Dr. PETER J. SALMON,
*President,
National Accreditation Council
for Agencies Serving the Blind
and Visually Handicapped,
New York, New York.*

DEAR PETER: Today I received from you the following telegram:

IN VIEW OF YOUR STATEMENT AT OUR LUNCH JUNE 4 1973 THAT YOU CANNOT GUARANTEE THERE WILL BE NO VIOLENCE ON THE PART OF NFB MEMBERS TOWARD NAC I HEREBY REQUEST YOU TO SEND TWO OF YOUR REPRESENTATIVES TO OBSERVE THE MEETING OF NAC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS STARTING 9:30 AM THURSDAY JUNE 21 1973 AT O'HARE INN DES PLAINES IL.

NAC never does anything with good grace, Peter. The organized blind had two observers and a number of demonstrators at your December, 1972, board meeting. They behaved with such decorum (a noteworthy fact in these times) that you felt compelled to say in your own minutes that they were courteous and orderly.

Our conduct at your December, 1972, meeting contrasts bleakly with NAC's behavior. Do you remember that Todd Handel (the son of your executive director) was caught literally listening at a keyhole and otherwise trying to spy on our activities? He said he was put on the payroll for the weekend. Whether this is so and whether it was done partly with Federal money, I do not, of course, know.

NAC supposedly exists to help blind people. All we have asked is that the blind be able to observe what you are doing and have some voice in your deliberations. NAC and HEW have represented to Congress during the past few months that you follow a policy of openness.

Yet, in violation of the vote of your own board of directors (and, according to the statements of some of them, without their knowledge) you changed the dates and place of your upcoming meeting to try to prevent us from being present, and you told me last week that your executive committee (again, without the knowledge or approval of the members of your own board) had decided to exclude the blind as observers. You now tell me that you "request" me to send two observers—but you do it with bad temper and for the wrong reasons. You do not issue the invitation on the grounds that it is morally right or that you have had a change of heart or that you see the justice of what we have asked. No! You do it in the name of fearing violence. Violence from whom? From blind people—the people who treated you courteously at your December meeting and upon whom the son of your executive director tried to spy—the people you are trying so diligently to serve.

Peter, has NAC no sense of shame at all? Have you no sense of moral scruple or ethical conduct? We will have observers at all of your meetings next week (Mr. John Taylor and Mr. Ralph Sanders), but I should think you would be embarrassed and ashamed to face them.

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
*President,
National Federation of the Blind.*

[Note.—Copies of this letter were sent to Members of Congress and to the persons listed at the end of President Jernigan's May 11 letter to Congress.]

* * * * *

SOCIETY FOR BLIND
ASKED TO "DE-NAC"

by

Victor Ereaux

[Editor's Note.—Following is a letter from the president of the Capitol Chapter, NFB of California (Sacramento), to the Sacramento Society for the Blind.]

Sacramento, California, April 12, 1973.

Mr. GEORGE COUPER,
*President, Sacramento Society
for the Blind,
Sacramento, California.*

DEAR MR. COUPER: At its regular meeting held on March 25, 1973, the Capitol Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of California passed a resolution that this chapter go on record as opposing the application of the Sacramento Society for the Blind for accreditation by the National Accreditation Council (NAC); that the Society be requested to withdraw its application for accreditation; and further, that the president of the Capitol Chapter acquaint the press and the public with its opposition to NAC and with the reasons for such opposition.

We feel keenly that NAC should either go out of business or affirmatively and positively reform itself. Reform means very definite and specific things. All NAC meetings, board meetings, and committee meetings must be completely open. At least

one-third of their entire board must be made up of consumer representatives. This does not mean just blind people. A consumer representative is a person, blind or sighted, selected by a representative organization of the blind to speak for it, responsible to that organization only and subject to recall by it. In this connection tokenism will not do. In other words, the demand will not be satisfied by packing the NAC Board with puppets from company unions and calling them consumer representatives.

Furthermore, NAC's standards must be revised so as to give recognition to the rights and real interests of the blind; that is, the attitudes of the consumers of the services of an agency must be taken into account when that agency is up for accreditation. What kind of a job is it doing in the opinion of those who use its services? What kind of mechanism does it have to ensure consumers' input?

This letter should not be construed as being critical of the present work and contributions of the Sacramento Society for the Blind nor of its Executive Director, Mr. Ryan, except for what we consider to be your very undesirable effort to secure accreditation by NAC. Rather, our quarrel is with the whole NAC concept and what it is doing to blind people.

As you may know, NAC is the brainchild of a private organization in work for the blind, the American Foundation for the Blind, and is heavily financed by the Foundation. By what right does any private organization assume the self-appointed task of accrediting both other private, and even public, agencies?

In view of this whole sorry mess, we hope

that your board will forthwith withdraw its application for accreditation by NAC, unless and until the above-mentioned reforms are incorporated in the NAC structure.

Will you please read this letter to the board at your next meeting. Thank you very much.

Very sincerely yours,

VICTOR EREAUX,
President,
Capitol Chapter, NFBC.

* * * * *

A PERSONAL CONVERSATION WITH A SPECTER

by
E. U. Parker

I remember from my childhood that there were ghosts in Mississippi, but I had not noticed any in the last thirty-five to forty years. Recently there was a visitor to our State. I met him at a hotel, and we went to a well-known restaurant for dinner. It developed that this visitor has worked with blind people for a quarter of a century. As we got in the car, as we left the car and went into the restaurant, his past experience was obvious. He was very helpful; he knew how to handle and lead the blind.

For nearly an hour I enjoyed a conversation with a very interesting and cultured gentleman. I began to feel as if I were in a dream world when this man wondered aloud why a prominent leader of the blind would attack a prominent leader of NAC. He mentioned the age of the NAC representative, pointed out that he also was blind, and listed many accomplishments

attributed to him as an administrator and a leader in legislation.

I did not get the connection, and said so. The issues between the Federation and NAC have to be fought out, but this battle should not, I said, be interpreted as a personal attack. Things began to seem eerie when the specter insisted on this interpretation and made a stout defense of NAC. When I pointed out that the blind could not be expected to regard lightly the intrusion made into their lives by this organization, the specter could not understand.

I said to myself, "It cannot be real," when I began to hear the same old condescending remarks: He never thought about a person's being blind while that person was in his company. He regarded blind people as being just like anyone else, and simply forgot they had a handicap. I remembered his close attention and excellent care toward me. Then I remembered three friends getting out of a car a short time ago in the same restaurant parking lot and their embarrassment when they realized they had left me at the car while they almost got inside before remembering. Now, who most nearly disregarded my physical condition?

Then the specter asked what the President of the NFB could be thinking about when he said blindness was a nuisance, not a disaster. He made a long and detailed argument to prove why the NFB philosophy on the matter is wrong. I pointed out that if those of us who are blind accepted this dismal disaster philosophy, our psychological handicap would be greater than our physical handicap; that if the public generally accepted it, they could not be expected to

accept us as social equals: They would naturally believe us so incapable that they would never allow us job opportunities and so on and so on.

Nevertheless, the specter contended, we blind must accept the fact of the total tragedy of our situation. I pointed out that my life had been neither a disaster nor a tragedy. He asked me to consider what I might have been if I had not been blind. I considered these things. I thought I might have been dead on some faraway island or have fallen in the Battle of the Bulge, as happened to so many friends in the wars that they fought so gallantly in my lifetime. Perhaps I would be a bum on some skid row. Perhaps many other bad things would have happened. As it is I have only had the nuisance of using a part of my income to make up the difference. The specter felt that I would be richer, more successful.

I stayed awake an extra hour that night dreading my disaster—thinking about what might have been. I lived in a dream world with ghosts for an hour worrying about the tragedy that one specter had, so eloquently, almost convinced me that I suffered. Thank goodness there came another day, and I put the dreadful thoughts out of my mind. But I still know that there will be many specters with perfectly good intentions—most of whom will be professional keepers of the blind—who will again and again shove me toward the depths of despair. If I am to live around and associate with these folks I will have to be on guard. I trust that I can resist—and continue to believe that blindness is a nuisance, not a tragedy. Unfortunately all of us must suffer some emotional scars from this philosophy expounded by our friends, many of whom

are professional and work with the blind.

Glory be! Most of us, in spite of the specters of gloom, will not only endure; we will prevail.

* * * * *

WHY I OBJECT TO NAC

by

Cathy B. Smith

None of us objects to maintenance of standards in the field of work for the blind and the visually handicapped. In fact, blind persons always have contended that schools, agencies, and others working in the field should maintain high standards of service and should be accountable not only to their boards but also to the blind.

We do have very serious objections to the arbitrary manner in which the NAC standards were set and the method by which the schools and agencies are evaluated for accreditation. Many of these standards are an obstacle in the path of blind individuals and treat them as second-class citizens. Yet NAC is never tired of congratulating itself for helping the blind of the Nation. These standards were mainly set by sighted persons who thought of certain ways that the blind of this nation should be served. It was done in a most undemocratic fashion with token representation of the blind on the commission setting the standards. Everything is packaged nicely and in professional jargon to bamboozle the unsuspecting public.

In fact these standards seem set to exclude the blind from several types of employment, just simply because they happen to be blind. They discriminate

against the very people they are supposed to help. There is no empirical proof for many of the assumptions about the blind found in the NAC standards.

Let us take the example of mobility and orientation teachers. NAC and its parent agency, the American Foundation for the Blind, have made a great fuss about it during the past decade or two. The NAC standards require that before he can even be considered for employment and training as a mobility teacher, a person must have perfect sight. That means a person with any visual limitation is automatically excluded from becoming a mobility instructor. Yet we know of cases where persons with 20/400 or less acuity are policemen and many with much less visual acuity are holding drivers licenses.

A person with a bachelor's degree can teach math, Spanish and Latin, chemistry and biology in high schools, both public and private across our Nation, but to teach mobility to our blind high school youngsters, a master's degree is required.

Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act has proved beyond doubt that para-professionals and teacher aides with no more than high school education, a short training course, and some on-the-job training can do a very good job of teaching our sighted youngsters in the public schools of our country, yet we require a master's degree for persons who might show a blind person how to cross a city street.

To the best of our knowledge no research shows that a person with normal vision can be a better mobility teacher than a person with 20/60 or 20/100, or even a legally blind person. The most I could find was that the American Foundation for the

Blind held a conference on mobility for the blind in the late 1950's and at this conference a man who claimed to have had thirty years of experience in teaching the blind thought that a mobility teacher must have normal sight, otherwise how would he know what the client was doing a block away. The Foundation at once agreed with this view and started the campaign for fully sighted mobility teachers. This view was further endorsed by Father Tom Carroll, author of a controversial book on blindness, and the view was adopted intact by the NAC Standards Commission.

The Federal Government funded programs at Boston College and Western Michigan University to train mobility teachers, and blind and partially sighted persons were excluded solely because of their sight. A very misleading article appeared in the "Education" section of *Newsweek* on November 23, 1962, at the behest of the Western Michigan Training Program. It went so far as to say that blind persons did not make good teachers.

NAC has no proof that a person with a visual loss cannot make a good teacher, or that a person with a master's degree can do a better job teaching mobility than one with a bachelor's degree or one with a diploma or certificate given at the end of a short course in mobility techniques. To paraphrase President Nixon, NAC made a profession out of the mobility needs of the blind and the mobility teachers made the profit and the taxpayer got stuck with the bill while the blind were told only persons with normal sight could teach this art. The blind were once again reminded that they were not equal to the sighted.

NAC is trying to reinforce this attitude through its accreditation policy. This view

further claims that only sighted people should work with the blind. This suits the schools and the agencies well. In fact this is what most of them have maintained throughout. Didn't we hear them tell us it is not good for blind people to be with other blind people? You should try to work with sighted people.

Another objection that I have to the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped is its unclear stand on the agency attitude that blindness is an unmitigated catastrophe and disaster and that the blind should be served by sighted professionals as much as possible.

Self-image is most important in any rehabilitation process. From the civil rights movement we learn that self-confidence and self-sustenance do not come to the members of minority groups if they are told that they are inferior because of their race, color, religion, nationality, or even the nature of their handicap. Courses in history are being redesigned to adequately represent the contributions of various minority groups and to improve their self-image.

While millions of tax dollars are spent on so-called "techniques of daily living" where a blind person supposedly is taught, among other things, how to take a bath, not a single cent is spent on letting this newly blinded person know the contributions to society of thousands of sightless persons throughout recorded history and throughout the world. He does not know the history of work in the field of blindness or the great men and women who have accomplished a great deal in spite of lack of sight. He has no knowledge of the organized movement of the blind and its

great leaders. In many cases he is not aware of the laws that help him or the laws that hinder him.

It is true that skills like Braille, typing, and mobility are of great help to a newly blinded person in the process of rehabilitation, but we are not aware of any "Step-by-step guide" included in the curriculum of rehabilitation centers operated by agencies for the blind that gives them the Federal, State, and local laws which affect blind persons, or of a historic background of work in the field of blindness, along with sketches of the lives of great blind persons.

NAC is an agency which is supposed to set standards for services to the blind. This makes it an advocacy group. Yet nowhere in its standards has it advocated that agencies and schools not discriminate against blind individuals in their hiring policies. We are asking the rest of the world to not discriminate against a blind person in educational, economic, and social opportunity because of his lack of sight, but NAC does not ask the agencies and schools for the blind to do the same.

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) sets standards and accredits all rehabilitation facilities for the handicapped, and there are several associations of colleges and secondary schools which accredit all secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. Yet we have to have NAC to accredit the agencies and schools for the blind.

Could it be that the American Foundation wants to be the expert national agency in the field of blindness and perpetuate custodial and segregated

facilities for the blind in fact, while talking about integration of the blind?

Until and unless NAC sincerely faces these questions and changes its policies to really help the blind, it will be opposed by the blind of the Nation, no matter how many Uncle Bobs, Big Brother Peters, and other Uncle Toms sit on its board or hold offices in it.

EVALUATION CRITICIZES STATE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

by

Wayne S. Cott

[Reprinted by courtesy of the
Albuquerque (New Mexico) *Journal*.]

The State School for the Visually Handicapped at Alamogordo was soundly criticized in an evaluation report prepared by the State Department of Education and released Wednesday. A portion of the evaluation was done by Educational Evaluation Associates, of Los Angeles. Other parts were done by members of the State Department of Education. All portions were critical of the school.

"The amount of financial waste, mismanagement, underutilization of facilities, and simply poor education for the money is beyond belief," wrote Marvin C. Alkin of Educational Evaluation Associates. "As an out-of-State resident, I was simply appalled at the expenditure and what it was buying. If I were a New Mexico resident, I would be aghast and outraged at the whole situation."

Leonard DeLayo, State superintendent of public instruction, reported he and Weldon

Perrin, his deputy, visited the school for one day and talked with several individuals in the community. "In our short visit to the school, we both became very concerned at the apparent financial waste with respect to availability of supplies, equipment, and the underutilization of facilities," reported DeLayo. "It is easy to understand how a school of this nature could underutilize facilities caused by a declining enrollment over a period of years; however, in reviewing the school history, we find that this underutilization is a result of continuing building programs rather than declining enrollment."

"I would only say that Dr. Alkin, in his report . . . sums up the feelings of me and my staff with regard to this school," DeLayo continued.

Alkin said the main area of criticism revolves around the manner in which students are selected. He said he observed a number of children who are mentally deficient, rather than visually handicapped. He noted he saw many students reading from regular school textbooks, with regular-sized print, and many reading from large-sized textbooks.

Classrooms and equipment are excellent but "largely unused," he said. He spoke of a large shop area which "would do justice to most large high schools in New Mexico"—for about 110 students, only some of whom are in high school. He found an arts and crafts room not being used, two typing classrooms used by a single teacher who uses them alternately, and a swimming pool, "probably better than anything else in the State of New Mexico—that would be adequate in size for a school ten to twenty times this population."

"I could go on describing areas of gross underutilization of facilities, but enough examples have been made to adequately demonstrate the point," Dr. Alkin wrote. He estimated dormitory facilities could easily handle twice the present number of students; and educational facilities, three times the present number. He criticized what he termed "compartmentalization" of the various units of the school, with housemothers, maintenance men, teachers, administration, and cafeteria all seeming "to function independent of the other group." He said staff members told him of a lack of communication between housemothers and teachers.

The education program itself, Dr. Alkin reported, has a "clear lack of imagination." He said the staff seems to go out of its way to imitate public school programs—including their deficiencies—although as a residence school it ought to be different. He noted the number of teachers and aides per student "may also prove to be a detriment," wondering how the students would ever be able to adjust to a normal social situation.

"Are you, through this program, dooming children to a life of institutionalization?" he asked.

He saw evidence of inefficiency in noneducational support facilities. He told of seeing maintenance men picking pecans from the trees on the campus—most of which he was told were thrown away. He stated the school has a large storehouse—but apparently buys its supplies in small quantities. "In major part, most of these deficiencies seemed to be related to bad management and a lack of administrative leadership," he wrote.

Dr. Alkin recommended turning the supervisory responsibility for the school over to the State Department of Education, and "better utilization of the facilities" by expanding the purpose of the school and using one or more of the dormitories as facilities to supplement those at the Los Lunas Hospital and Training School. Staff members of the Department of Education were critical of details of the school program. They stated health problems in addition to blindness exist, but there is no pediatrician, physical therapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist on the staff. An Alamogordo doctor is, however, on call twenty-four hours a day in case a student becomes ill.

Counseling, the staff found, "was conducted sporadically on informal encounters." "Dorm lighting in individual rooms was questioned for the partially sighted when it would be improper for normal vision," the staff reported. "Lighting over students' desks is from a single desk lamp. There was no overhead or general lighting in the rooms."

SERVICES FOR BLIND SHORTSIGHTED?

by
Craig Smith

[Reprinted by courtesy of the Seattle (Washington) *Post-Intelligencer*.]

A blind man recently honored as "First Citizen of Seattle" calls his experience at the blind rehabilitation center in Seattle a waste of time. A blind University of Washington student says the State discourages him from trying new ventures.

These are two complaints among affidavits released by blind people seeking creation of a State commission for the blind.

The National Federation of the Blind of Washington wants a commission created outside the State Department of Social and Health Services. The current State programs operated by the "superagency" are mired in custodialism, bureaucracy, and incompetency, charges Edward S. Foscue, welfare chairman of the four-hundred-member organization.

Excerpts from affidavits:

• University of Washington student Raymond Angel: "Whenever I say I would like to try something new or different, they (State Services for the Blind) try to dissuade me from it by telling me it will be 'hard,' 'difficult,' or even perhaps 'impossible.' As for something being 'impossible'—you can't tell until after you've tried. And, even if you fail, someone else might succeed. The point is you've got to keep on trying!"

Angel also complained that his State assistance leaves him with only about \$20 for living and emergency expenses after he pays for board and room. He said \$13 of this amount goes to feed and care for his guide dog.

• R. E. (Bob) Runck, 6420 California Avenue SW., director of the West Seattle Senior Citizens Fun Club, who was presented a "First Citizen of Seattle" award February 9 by Mayor Wes Uhlman: "To this day I found that I had wasted my time at the Rehab (rehabilitation center). In the past couple years the situation is even worse as they do not believe in job

counseling and have done away with the competent instructors. . . . It appears the present bureaucracy does not want the blind to become other than second-class citizens."

• Ralph V. Solberg, Warden, Washington: Discussing a tour of the rehabilitation center he was taken on in 1967, Solberg said he was told that administrative offices were down the hall, but "You blind people are not allowed beyond this point."

"At this time I became infuriated inside. It was clearly evident that I was considered to them as somewhat less than human. To me, as a former newspaper publisher, a former city councilman, a former president of a chamber of commerce, and a taxpayer, this was a direct insult."

• Alden R. Gerling of Spokane: While at the vocational school in Seattle, Gerling said the following occurred: "I asked to have all my doctors' reports that were sent over from Spokane read to me. They refused to do it. They said they misplaced them and didn't have time to find them."

• Mrs. Roberta McNeil, of Seattle, whose husband, Charles, is blind: "State Services is a wishy-washy, 'pass-the-buck' place where the blind are put off with the lack-of-State-funds excuse, a place where counselors never put themselves inside the shoes of a blind person . . . where something as important as mobility is to the blind is left up to one man to train several students who get a half-hour mobility class . . . two or three times a week, and where . . . there is a waiting list to enter as a student."

Some blind men who either operate or

have operated concession stands criticized the support they were given by the State.

● Albert R. Sage, of Seattle, said there was no running water to prepare equipment or clean equipment at his site. He also commented: "At no time during this period of operation did I ever feel like an independent businessman for many reasons. One—I was never allowed the right to partake in any discussions concerning the business which were held between the Northwest Rehabilitation Center, GSA, and the Post Office."

Foscue himself wrote an affidavit in which he tells of a Lions Club member who asked the State for information on specific jobs held by blind people so that the Lion could better promote the idea of hiring the blind.

Foscue said the man was told by the State that because of confidentiality laws, he would have to find the blind people himself and get them to sign a release. Then, and only then, would the State reveal the type of job the man was holding, Foscue said. "*Great Help!*" Foscue wrote, sarcastically.

Bills to create a commission for the blind have been introduced in both houses of the legislature, but the bills are still in committee.

The National Federation of the Blind of Washington offered to fly gubernatorial aide Ralph Munro to Iowa to inspect the operations of that State's well-regarded commission for the blind.

In an interview Foscue, 52, a retired businessman who went blind less than five years ago, said: "The problem of the blind,

when you get right down to it, is not so much that you can't see any more. It's what people think about you when you can't see any more. They think you automatically lose your marbles, and you automatically are figured as something less than a normal person and considered completely incompetent to do many things."

Foscue said "a complete change in attitude" on the part of State officials is "essential." He said he didn't think this was possible unless a commission was created and led by fresh personnel.

* * * * *

THE D.C. CONVENTION by Jim Doherty

New officers, an acrid exchange with the regional librarian, and some genuinely usable information highlighted this year's D.C. convention held May 12.

After a festive Friday evening gathering, the serious business began early Saturday. First on the program was a representative from HEW who talked about Disability Insurance, Medicare, and other items covered under the old H.R. 1. He got his message across, but only with a major assist from Orlo Nichols, a Federationist and an actuary at the Social Security Administration, who corrected some of the gentleman's data.

The morning session featured a panel on employment opportunities. Four blind persons described how they got into their careers, what problems they have had to overcome, and the attitudes of their coworkers. On this last point, all agreed

with John Taylor, the NFB representative who chaired the panel, that the blind worker can control these attitudes to a great extent by displaying self-confidence and independence.

As part of an effort to include school-agers in the convention, we arranged an awards luncheon for them at which John Taylor gave a brief talk. Awards were presented to students who had come up with original projects. The variety and creativity of the entries was remarkable. Winners were: Vicky Smith, for her "Victorian recipes"; Valerie Jackson, for a very sensitive poem; Norma Black, for a collection of riddles; Joyce Absten, for a short story; and Sharlene Morris, for a finger-crocheted cap.

Vocational rehabilitation under the Social Security Trust Fund is growing in importance as a source of assistance for blind people. John Taylor launched the afternoon session by detailing the steps involved in using the Trust Fund.

Then came the only fireworks of the day. Washington's regional library is now a part of the District's public library system, under the Division of Special Services. The chief of that division outlined the services her staff hopes to provide. Someone asked how many blind people were now, or might eventually be, employed by the division. The lady replied by going through various jobs and showing how it had been determined that this work *could not possibly be done* by a blind person. After a heated exchange with some well-stated, sharply pointed questions and comments, we let her escape with a promise to discuss with her superiors the establishment of a liaison committee made up of Federationists and library

staff members.

Tensions were relieved then by a discussion with a representative from Washington's Transit Authority, who asked that we work with "Metro" on the travel problems created by extensive subway construction. Following this, Walt Weber, from Richmond, Virginia, told the D.C. group of his State affiliate's plans to form a credit union.

Election of officers was the last piece of business for the afternoon. Orlo Nichols (mentioned earlier), who has served two terms as our first vice-president, made the logical step up to the presidency this year. Succeeding Orlo as first vice-president is Tom Bickford, who is well known throughout the NFB. Ken Reed, who works for the Labor Department and has been on our board for a year, was chosen second vice-president. Mary Nichols, wife of our new president, will continue in her post of corresponding secretary. Virginia Bickford, wife of our new first vice-president and mother of the youngest-ever Federationist, will do likewise with her duties as recording secretary. Kitty MacNabb's reliability as treasurer was again endorsed this year. Completing our executive board are Roger Petersen, whose NFB activity goes back to the early days of the Students Division; Virginia Nagle, who really needs no further introduction; and Charles Hackney, a sighted member who has worked hard to bring parents of blind students into NFB work.

Convention banquet speeches are a good source of Federation philosophy and inspiration. John Taylor certainly filled that bill for us, providing just the send-off we needed to insure another year of

accomplishment.

IT PAYS TO COMPLAIN—SOMETIMES

In the February 16, 1973, issue of the *Federal Register* there were published proposed regulations governing the service programs available to recipients of public assistance, as envisaged by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. In one of the proposed sections the State is required to make a redetermination of each individual's service plan every three months. This is much too frequent and would simply bog down in a mess and mass of paper work the social worker's time and effort.

In another section it was proposed that a service plan would have to be redeveloped and maintained on a current basis and reviewed at least every six months. Here again the required mound of paper work would simply bog down the poor social worker. Finally, and this is the worst of them all, it was proposed that a State need provide only one of the defined services which it elects to include in its plan. For the blind program the following were included under defined services which the State may elect to include with its plan material: chore services, day-care services for adults, educational services, employment services, health-related services, home-delivered or congregate meals, homemaker services, protective services, special services for the blind, and transportation services.

Obviously, each of the above-mentioned services should be available to blind recipients when needed, not just one of

them.

HEW invited comments on its proposals. A total of 208,515 comments were received from 198,759 individuals and organizations, including Congressmen, Governors, State legislators, mayors, faculties and students of universities and colleges, labor unions, and many other groups and individuals.

After receiving this avalanche of comments, HEW published its final regulations in the *Federal Register* of May 1, 1973. The requirement was lengthened from three to six months for a redetermination of the need for services, but retains the reevaluation period of six months for the service plan. However, and most tragic of all, section 221.5 of the final regulations still provides that under the Adult Services program, States are required to provide appropriate applicants and recipients of financial assistance at least *one* of the defined services which the State elects to list in its plan material.

The whole future of services for Aid to the Blind, Old Age Assistance, and Aid to the Disabled looks bleak indeed. It may pay to complain, but not very much, especially to HEW.

ALITALIA AIRLINES CHANGES WORLDWIDE POLICY

[Editor's Note.—The following letters, written by Phyllis M. Gration, executive director of the Lady Nell "Seeing Eye" Dog School, and by the manager of Alitalia Air Lines shows that determination and resolute action on the part of the blind bring results.]

Malvern, Australia, 1st March, 1973.

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: I am herein enclosing a photostat copy of a letter which we have received from the Alitalia Airlines informing us that owing to an experience which Harold and I had whilst traveling last year, on the Alitalia Airlines, and our protesting very strongly, the Alitalia Airlines have changed their worldwide policy of blind people traveling on this particular airline.

I would be pleased if you could publish in *The Braille Monitor* our experience and a copy of the letter which we received, as a result of our efforts, from Alitalia Airlines.

We booked on Alitalia Airlines from Venice to Rome. On arriving at the airport, we booked in our luggage. A few minutes later we were asked to go to a counter, and a woman there asked us to sign an indemnity form which relieved the airline from all responsibility or claims against them if we had an accident.

Of course we refused to sign such a form when we were told that other passengers did not have to sign such a form.

We demanded to see the manager, and he was most adamant that we had to sign the indemnity form. On our asking for an explanation, he said that it was because of our blindness and was similar to a pregnant woman. My husband, Harold, assured him that neither he nor I were pregnant, and we said that we could see no similarity at all between pregnancy and blindness. We told the manager that we intended traveling on the plane without signing the indemnity form, whereupon we were told that we would get no assistance whatsoever from any of the airways staff, and as we could

not see the gateway to the plane, we would not find it so easy.

We were determined, and told him just to watch us.

We walked around the airport asking different people, as we heard them chatting, whether they spoke English or not. After several unsuccessful attempts, we at last met a woman who said that she spoke English and had lived for thirteen years in Australia, and she was returning to Australia on the same plane that we were catching.

We asked her if she minded our walking out to the plane with her, when the plane arrived. Of course, she did not and was delighted to meet us.

The manager must have been watching us and realised that we had met someone who would assist us. A few minutes before the plane was to leave, he sent an air hostess to us who said that she had been directed to walk with us to the plane. We wondered what would have happened if he had seen that we were stranded.

On arriving at Rome, we could not get any assistance at all. At all other airports, an agent had been waiting to assist with luggage collection and a taxi.

We again walked around the airport at Rome trying to find someone who could speak English, and who could show us where to collect the luggage. It took half an hour before we managed to find a man who spoke English, and he seemed very annoyed at the whole thing when we explained to him what was happening to us. He got an air hostess to get a taxi for us.

After a great deal of difficulty, we managed to get an interview with the airways manager in Rome, and told him that we intended to take the matter up further on our return to Australia.

This we did, and as a result, we have received this letter from the Alitalia Airlines stating that as a result of our protests, they have changed their worldwide policy.

Yours sincerely,

PHYLLIS M. GRATION,
*Executive Director,
Lady Nell "Seeing Eye" Dog School.*

ALITALIA,
27th February 1973.

DEAR MR. & MRS. GRATION: I wish to inform you that as a result of your complaint regarding the request by our personnel in Venice for an indemnity form to be signed, which was subsequently forwarded to our head office, our "worldwide company procedure" has now been changed and such indemnity is no longer required.

May I extend my best wishes to you both.

Yours sincerely,

ALITALIA
ITALO MORGERA,
Manager, Melbourne Office.

MISSISSIPPI CONVENTION

by
E. U. Parker

The NFB of Mississippi held its spring meeting May 12 in Jackson at the Hotel Heidelberg. With Mother's Day the following day, several members ill, and the tornado watch, our attendance was held down to about eighty people. But what we lacked in numbers we made up in interest and enthusiasm. Door prizes were given away throughout the day. These were arranged for by a committee of Louise Beasley and Melba Barlow. E. U. Parker and Melba Barlow took turns in presiding at the meeting, which was called to order at 9:25 a.m. by the president, Albert Beasley. The invocation was given by Robert Sallis.

Our first speaker was J. I. Rankin, a recent appointee to the board of trustees of the Mississippi School for the Blind. Mr. Rankin told of studies in progress by the teaching staff to make sure the school's curriculum was up to date. He said the board was going to visit schools in adjacent States to get ideas that might help them do a better job in educating blind youth. He also said they are looking for a mobility instructor, and many thousands of dollars have been set aside to purchase new equipment and renovate buildings during the summer holiday. He also said that the board is studying whether or not to move the school and is considering possible new sites. Mr. Rankin stressed one point over all others: that the State agency for the blind, the board and staff of the school for the blind, the legislature, and everyone else concerned were interested in helping the blind. We should realize, he added, that you can only train someone so much before he must take over for himself.

The next speaker, State Representative Mack Graham, president of the Parents Association of the Mississippi School for the Blind, pointed out that much care must be taken concerning the type of person employed at the school and that more attention should be given to the care and general training of students outside school hours—from 3 p.m. to 8 a.m. He was complimentary of some of the steps taken recently at the school but said more improvements should be made with the assistance of the parents and the legislators. Representative Graham said he is grateful to the people from all walks of life who have helped to see that the school was not moved to the Sanatorium, or some other unknown place. He indicated that any attempts to move the school out of the immediate Jackson area are not acceptable and will be vigorously resisted.

Harold Richterman, director of rehabilitation services for National Industries for the Blind, was the speaker who traveled the farthest. He told the NIB story in a very effective manner and in a very polished oratorical style. He discussed the Wagner-O'Day Act and the opportunities it offered for employing blind people. He said that in the sheltered workshops associated with NIB there are over five thousand jobs in eighty-five workshops in thirty-five States. He also listed the services which NIB offers. Fifteen hundred people have been rehabilitated for private employment in the past five years, he reported. NIB plans to increase the number of associated workshops and the growth of present workshops to eventually provide eighteen thousand jobs. Royal Maid, a nonprofit workshop organized and controlled by NIB at Hazlehurst, Mississippi, offers a wide range of rehabilitative services and employs about

ninety blind people at an average wage of \$1.75 per hour. (This writer cannot resist two editorial comments. First, not one trainee or employee has been moved from either of the two workshops located in Mississippi to private competitive employment. Second, though we do not dispute the statistics given, most of the Royal Maid employees that we know make less than \$1.70 per hour. Many earn only \$1.20; and at least one or two, eighty cents per hour.)

Next there were reports from our three local chapters: The Hazlehurst report was given by James Moore; the Laurel report by Clifton Boyd; and the Jackson report by Melba Barlow. A report on the Louisiana State convention was given by Hugh Barlow, who was lucky enough to attend their recent meeting.

Breland Collier gave the luncheon invocation. Luncheon music was provided by Claude Smith, Jr., and two of his music students. Our luncheon speaker was Senator Sam Wright, a prominent life insurance agent who represents Post One of Hinds County in the Mississippi Legislature. His subject was "You and Your Legislature." Much of his talk concerned provisions of important bills passed in the 1973 session, and also those measures passed by the senate which did not get through the house. The only two points of direct interest to the blind were: (1) an additional \$750 exemption from State income tax for the blind, as well as for persons over the age of sixty-five, was passed by both Houses and signed by the Governor; and (2) complete exemption from the property tax on homes, but this only passed the senate and died in the house.

Senator Wright emphasized—as have Governor Waller, Lieutenant Governor Winter, Dr. Milton Baxter, and others at previous meetings—that every citizen should know his legislators and should discuss his problems with them. The Senator pointed out that all bills have to be initiated and passed by the legislature. He said that no one knew the problems of the blind or what the blind needed better than the blind themselves, and he urged us to let the legislators know what it is that we want.

The final speaker on the program was William F. Minor, one of Mississippi's most prominent investigators and columnists for twenty-six years. Though he writes for the New Orleans, Louisiana, *Times-Picayune* he is widely considered the dean of the Mississippi press corps. His contribution to the program was probably the most interesting of the day, but since it was primarily about politics in Mississippi, we will not summarize it here.

During the day two resolutions were discussed and passed. Resolution 73-1 calls for reexamination and improvements at the Mississippi School for the Blind. Since there is no formal mobility program at the school and since in recent years some students have been graduated without being taught Braille, the main thrust of this resolution was that more attention should be given to the skills especially needed by blind persons. Resolution 73-2 instructed the officers to oppose association of any agency with NAC. The resolution particularly asked that the State division for the blind discontinue negotiations for NAC accreditation which have already begun. It was pointed out that even aside from NAC's opposition to the organized blind and our feeling that the NAC

standards are harmful to blind people, the division is spending and will be spending many dollars to gain accreditation when the money could better be spent on services to its clients.

The meeting was concluded with a short business session. Amendments to the charter were approved and it was voted that our members, at least for the time being, should accept appointments to the advisory board planned by the division.

BENIGN PREJUDICE ANGERS STATE'S BLIND

by
John Turner

[Reprinted by courtesy of the Hartford (Connecticut) *Times*.]

Would you like to find yourself in the paradoxical plight of being the victim of discrimination because everyone loves you? Ridiculous—impossible to believe, you say?

Well, just ask any of Connecticut's five thousand blind about that. They'll tell you what it's like to be forbidden entry into a shop because everyone's scared stiff that you're going to walk through a dozen shelves of merchandise.

They'll tell you about interviews with prospective employers who are crass enough to believe that your mental faculties went out the window with your sight, or of the landlords who seize on the idea that you'd be bound to leave the stove, iron, and lights burning twenty-four hours a day—a veritable human fire hazard—merely because you can't see.

These, and many more, are the problems that confront the blind in this State every day. Despite humanity's twentieth-century enlightenment and a welter of organizations established to care for the blind, there still remains the obstacle of prejudice—be it ever so benign.

"Everyone loves us and that is our big problem," Mrs. Shirley Lebowitz, executive committee member of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), and public relations officer of the State affiliate, said. "People treat us with an overprotective philosophy—they really think the best thing we should do is stay home and read Braille books," she said at her Iroquois Road, West Hartford, home.

Mrs. Lebowitz recalls the time in the not-too-distant past, when she was not allowed to enter a building or attend a function with a guide dog. But State legislation changed that. Then fresh obstacles got in the way. Like the time she had to quote the law to the obstinate restaurant proprietor who tried to bar her dog.

Now she and the NFB members are looking forward to even more legislation. They are hoping that at the next State session, bills will be passed making illegal any kind of discrimination against the blind. Known as the Model White Cane Law, the new act would "open up housing, fair employment, mobility, and public accommodation" and is seen as a major breakthrough by the NFB.

"Sometimes employers will not really try and see what jobs there are at their establishments which don't really require the use of sight," Mrs. Lebowitz, who claims that job discrimination is still one of

the outstanding anomalies, said. "I type at home with the use of a recording device. Yet people have actually said to me: 'How do you manage to type in straight lines?' We don't wish to pilot a plane, drive a bus, or become surgeons . . . but given proper training and education, we can do the jobs of average people so long as it isn't absolutely necessary to have use of your sight."

Public ignorance is one of the greatest frustrations of the blind, Mrs. Lebowitz explained. "I am blind . . . yet many people feel that I and my colleagues are really helpless and can't do things for ourselves. People look at the cane and guide dog as symbols of pity . . . yet we regard them as symbols of freedom," she said.

Mrs. Lebowitz says that Hartford's public schools are one area where the blind can attempt to gain independence. "There are about two hundred and fifty blind children in this State and I think they should go to public schools where they can learn to adjust to the true-to-life environment," she said.

Many blind pupils are already attending public schools. Through the help of specially trained assistants who augment the teaching staff, arrangements are made to supply blind students with equipment, such as Braille books and tape recordings, that they need to be able to study the same curricula as the rest of the class.

The next step for the blind is to gain "true representation" on the State board of education and services for the blind. "Sure, there are blind people on the board, but everyone there is an appointee of Governor Meskill," said Mrs. Lebowitz. "As far as we're concerned they could be doing a

better job and once we get representation on the board we can start working toward that end. But we've got a long way to go yet."

**BLIND VENDORS,
GOVERNMENT WORKERS
VIE FOR NICKELS, DIMES**

by
Jane Saladof

[Reprinted by courtesy of the Long Island (New York) Press.]

Thirty years after he lost his eyesight to a Japanese explosive device on Guam, Valentine Piersa is losing his livelihood to a postal employees welfare committee.

The fifty-nine-year-old World War II veteran is a blind vendor at the Jamaica Post Office where he competes with twenty-two vending machines installed by the committee since 1962. Profits at his two machines have fallen off as a result.

Recently, Piersa's candy-cigarette stand—a lobby fixture for nineteen years—was moved to a rear, employees-only corner, ostensibly because he was being robbed by the public. Again he complains that business is down.

"We all like Val. We'd do anything we can to help Val," said John Smith, chairman of the committee, which voted to give him a monthly eighty-four-dollar "welfare" check bringing his earnings to about \$225 a month. He used to earn seven thousand dollars a year.

The Piersa story is not an isolated incident. Across the nation, blind vendors

are complaining of being squeezed out by Federal employees committees and the Federal General Services Administration (GSA). The committees, often called welfare or recreation funds, use the commissions from vending machine profits for employee programs such as scholarship funds, mass cards, retirement gifts, bowling awards, and annual dividends. Although the funds are not always administered by unions, union members often are involved.

GSA, responsible for most Federal buildings, has the power to approve or bar the installation of employees' machines, private food services, and the blind vendors. It frowns on the blind's involvement in hot foods and has attempted to limit what items they may sell. Consequently many blind vendors are losing earnings. Some are losing jobs.

In addition to Valentine Piersa, a spot check of blind vendors in the Long Island-New York City region found:

- Fred Schweinsberger, partially sighted operator of an employees cafeteria at the Health, Education, and Welfare building, 96-05 Horace Harding Boulevard, Corona. He is competing with a Schrafft's cafeteria which GSA admitted to an adjoining Federal building last year after refusing the blind permission to serve hot foods as requested by a local union.

"There's no assurance that they could safely handle an operation of that type," explained George M. Paduano, GSA's regional director for public buildings. Another GSA spokesman said that according to regulations the blind are "not eligible to operate a feeding operation where cooking is done on the premises."

However, there's no market for two cafeterias, according to Schweinsberger. He said both are losing money and forecast one would fold up. The GSA spokesman said he has no knowledge that either cafeteria is suffering. Schweinsberger took over the cafeteria eight months ago from a man who did retire after running up a deficit. The business had eleven employees before Schrafft's. Now it pays three partially sighted men eighty-five dollars a week. Schweinsberger tries, often unsuccessfully, to gross \$125 himself. His wife is expecting their first child next month and he said he is considering applying for supplemental welfare assistance.

- Thomas Casey is the sole blind vendor since last December 26 in the new Internal Revenue Service regional center at Holtsville in Suffolk County. "I haven't taken a cent out of it yet as far as salary," said Casey, a Bohemia resident whose wife works elsewhere.

Casey operates what the blind refer to as a "dry stand"—candy and cigarettes, but no coffee. He charges that the lack of coffee costs him patrons. He also has been assigned the commissions from seven vending machines. However, he said he did not know until he started work that GSA allowed thirty-two more vending machines in various corners of the five-building complex. "They can argue these machines are not in proximity to myself, but they are," Casey maintains. He does not know where his competitors' profits go, but suggests he should get a share of them. Casey added that he feels he could do two hundred dollars a day business (not profit) if his stand were moved to a better location within the IRS complex.

The GSA spokesman said none of the machines operated by the Canteen Company are in the same building with Casey. He said the GSA contracted to allow the other thirty-two machines "in order to provide the lowest possible price for federal employees." GSA will look into the situation and encourage Casey to carry different items which might be more salable, the spokesman added.

- William Van Duyne is the blind operator of a dry stand with interests in vending machines at the post office building at 90 Church Street, Manhattan. He's been there thirty years.

Since his "best year," 1969, Van Duyne's income has dropped from \$1700 a month to \$402. His payroll, which once amounted to ten thousand dollars with the vending machine earnings, has dropped to the point where he can only cover himself, his wife, and one blind employee, Arthur Grist. Van Duyne fears having to lay off Grist, who since 1956 has supported his wife and three children on his salary at the stand. Both live in Brooklyn.

Van Duyne blames the Employees Recreation Fund of the Manhattan and Bronx Post Offices, with whom he splits the vending machine profits. "They have parties on all this money and we're trying to put people to work," he said. Paul Meyrowitz, attorney for the fund, said the money goes not for parties, but for safe-driver awards, twenty-five-dollar pension bonds when employees retire (more than one thousand last year) and small annual dividends to employees in the two boroughs. He denied that any blind vendors are going broke in the post offices, and noted that all contracts covering distribution of commissions are negotiated

by the New York Commission for the Visually Handicapped, which technically employs 210 vendors at 144 stands. The commission, Meyrowitz said, can renegotiate any contract where a vendor is earning less than a postal employee, roughly \$7,700 a year. "There are some instances where we give them the full eighty percent," he claimed, explaining that twenty percent of the earnings are paid to the Government for electricity and other overhead.

The postal employees are considered to be the toughest competitor for the blind, both in terms of numbers of vending machines and political power when legislation favoring the vendors is brought to Congress. However, both sides concede that part of the problem is that they are competing for shares of a smaller pie. Automation and Federal job freezes have reduced the number of potential customers for services catering to Federal employees.

The Jamaica Post Office has dropped one hundred employees in the past two years because of attrition and new machinery which allows an employee to forward 3600 letters a minute instead of the previous 1000. Its connection with the two-thousand-employee Kennedy Airport unit has been severed and most of the six hundred remaining employees work late shifts when Valentine Piersa's stand is not open. Welfare Chairman Smith said the commissions are down to \$4600 a year, which the committee must supplement with a four-dollar fee for each employee. "One way or another, it isn't going to make him rich. It isn't going to make us rich," he observed, adding that he personally would have no objection to turning the whole vending operation over to Piersa.

The vendor, who supports a wife and two children in Floral Park, said that except for the "welfare" checks, the committee has ignored his plight. "If I ask for something (a machine), they don't have the room to put it in," he said. "I don't know what's the matter. I can't figure this out."

Officials in the New York City and Albany offices of the Commission for the Visually Handicapped would not discuss publicly the plight of vendors such as Piersa because they said they have to negotiate with the employee committees and the GSA. But Joseph Parenello, chairman of the local branch of the New York State Blind Vendors Association, was outspoken. His vending machine cafeteria service is flourishing at the new Internal Revenue Service building, 126 Church Street, Manhattan. But he had to let five blind employees go who worked in a counter cafeteria which was not allowed to move from the old IRS building. Parenello said that two have since died, two are employed in other stands, and one is a housewife on disability. If large numbers of blind vendors are forced out, he forecast, they will be forced onto welfare. "Most people that have any guts don't want to receive welfare," he asserted. He also had sharp words for the employees committees.

"Blatantly, it's breaking the law and the Comptroller General has given up."

The law is the Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936 which established the Blind Vendors Program and ordered that their stands be given preference in public buildings.

The reference to the Comptroller General involves a 1952 ruling by that Office [the General Accounting Office] indicating that all vending commissions not going to blind

vendors must be sent to the United States Treasury if earned in Government buildings. It does not appear to have ever been enforced.

There are also United States postal regulations which mandate that the blind be given preference in terms of location, competition, and placement.

(At the Jamaica Post Office, the employees committee installed a machine dispensing canned soda in competition with Piersa's machine selling soda in cups. Postmaster Martin Simms said he knew of no regulation barring the committee's action.)

The GSA also has a policy giving preference to blind vendors' stands, according to Richard Vawter, public affairs officer at its Washington headquarters. This policy does not extend to employee cafeterias, but the blind can bid to run them, he added. "We like as much competition as we can get because it keeps the prices down," Vawter said. However, GSA attempted late last year to ban the blind from selling certain hot foods at their stands because, according to Vawter, "we found that vendors were serving so many varieties that the cafeterias set up under contract (with GSA) were failing." The ban was withdrawn in December, he reported, because "there was so much heat raised."

The heat was raised for the other side last year when Senator Jennings Randolph, of West Virginia (author of the original legislation), and Representative John Brademus, of Indiana, attempted to strengthen it. Randolph's amendment passed the Senate. Brademus' died in committee after Federal employees' lobbyists voiced strong opposition at a

public hearing. Aides to both men said some form of legislation would be introduced this year after the General Accounting Office, headed by the Comptroller General, finishes a requested audit of the blind vendors' situation nationwide.

Robert Humphries of Randolph's staff said the Senator's Subcommittee on the Handicapped is "pledged to action" early in the session. "We think it's a general problem," he said, citing numerous reports of "violations of the spirit if not the letter of the act." Humphries forecast the amendments would pass the Senate again, but made no guess as to the House of Representatives, where the lobbyists last directed their energies. The postal unions, he noted, "are the most active and the most vociferous. They've got a good thing going."

Jack Duncan, counsel to Brademus' Subcommittee on Education, said "there's a good chance some form of legislation will pass." What that form is will be determined by Randolph, Duncan said, suggesting the amendment might broaden the program to include other handicapped workers.

While not underestimating the power of the lobbies, he maintained the amendment was not submitted for a vote last session because the committee could not answer the questions raised by the lobbyists. The audit, expected some time next month, should determine how much money, how many blind vendors, and how many welfare committees are involved.

"It seems so innocent," Duncan observed, "but it's a hairy issue."

RECIPES OF THE MONTH

by

Ned L. Graham

String Beans and Corn

1 pound frozen string beans
1 pound frozen corn
4 strips of bacon
1½ cups water
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon sugar

Fry the bacon until crisp; set aside the bacon, save the drippings. Boil the water; add sugar, salt, and string beans and cook for five to six minutes. Add the corn and bacon drippings. Mix thoroughly and cook for five to eight more minutes, or until tender. Drain and serve (with bacon, if desired).

Oven-barbequed Spareribs

1 slab spareribs (approximately 3 pounds)
1 teaspoon red pepper
1 teaspoon black pepper
Barbeque sauce (Open Pit)
mixed with 1 Tbsp. Louisiana hot sauce

Rub ribs thoroughly with red and black pepper. Place ribs on a rack in a shallow pan. Add two cups of water. Place pan in an oven heated to 350 degrees and cook until ribs are brown on both sides (about 30 to 35 minutes). Remove ribs from pan and cut into serving pieces. Line a pan with aluminum foil and cover the foil with a little barbeque sauce. Add the ribs and cover them thoroughly with barbeque sauce. Cover the pan tightly with foil, place it back in the 350-degree oven, and bake until the ribs are tender (approximately one hour).

MONITOR MINIATURES

BLIND PEOPLE IN THE NEWS. . . .
Bob Mills of Kettleman City (Calif.) who runs a rope factory which sells all that it makes—much of it made by hand... Dorothy Harris of Baltimore (Md.) who teaches at Community College of Baltimore... Musicologist Susan Zisselman of Brooklyn (N.Y.)... Captain William Steward Dodge who has patented a cargo shoring device and a hoisting device, and a plexiglass chart table for small boats, and who has written training manuals and a book "Tips from the Captain"... Bill Straley, computer programmer for the New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry, in Trenton... Bob Sweetman, 118-pound wrestler at Stanford University (Calif.)... Wayne Sandberg, who would like to get back to more regular ice skating, helps by circulating petitions to get the City of Boise (Idaho) to build an ice rink... Sue Ammeter of Washington State testifying before the State legislature in support of a bill to provide a commission for the blind... Ken Rapp of Laguna (Calif.) who sails his Hobie Cat and recently took part in a regatta at Arizona's Lake Havasu... Jim Rader who answers questions for those who call the Louisville (Ky.) Internal Revenue Office... Bill Haenke of Mossyrock (Wash.) who manufactures picture frames... Kenneth Medema of Montclair (N.J.), a musician who recently did a series of programs for elementary schools... Carol Ann Thatcher, English teacher at Roy (Utah) High School... Lori Moritz of Eugene (Ore.) who received a letter from President Nixon for a poem she wrote on the occasion of the ceasefire in Vietnam... Sam Pugh and Thomas E. Murphy, blind darkroom X-ray technicians at Riverview Hospital in Red Bank

(N.J.) . . . Oregon College of Education where the rooms are numbered in Braille as well as print.

* * * * *

Recently the prestigious San Francisco Rose Society presented its annual show in Golden Gate Park's Hall of Flowers. In the spirited contest for best entries, fragrance was judged by a sightless member of the Rose Society, none other than Lawrence (Muzzy) Marcelino. Little did we know that we had in our midst, in fact as Secretary of the NFB, a distinguished "rosarian."

* * * * *

In a study of Aid to Blind recipients in the country, HEW reports that about one in four visually handicapped adults is now able to get around without assistance. The study was based on statistics compiled in 1970. In the eight-year period since the previous study in 1962 there were increases in attendance at schools for the blind (11.3 to 14.2 percent), increases among those possessing a talking-book machine (10.6 to 16 percent), and an increase in the number of blind persons who can read Braille (8 to 10.5 percent). There was also an increase in full-time employment of AB recipients from 2.7 to 3.8 percent. Recipients who have never been employed decreased from 36.3 to 33.4 percent. From 1962 to 1970, recipients who had attended high school but did not graduate rose from 7.3 to 10.8 percent; while those who had completed high school almost doubled, from 5.6 to 10 percent; and those with some college training rose from 2.4 to 4.3 percent.

* * * * *

The NFB of Colorado is currently engaged in trying to convince the board of education of the Denver public school system that blindness is not a deterrent to effective teaching. The board presently has a code of physical guidelines which prohibits the employment of blind teachers. John D. Ford, of the NFB of Colorado's committee on education, points out that there is no factual basis for maintaining such guidelines. On the contrary, there is every reason to eliminate them. There are over three hundred blind teachers employed across the country, teaching at all grade levels and in all subject areas. Ford says that all they ask is the right to succeed or fail like any other person.

* * * * *

It is reported that in Russia blind persons have several privileges. They pay no income tax, they travel free on municipal and suburban transport, and they enjoy free postal service. They are entitled to pensions (at age forty for blind women and age fifty for blind men.) They receive full pay for a three-day week. State grants to blind students are fifty percent higher than those to the sighted. Blind students are also entitled to large discounts on typewriters, tape recorders, and other study aids.

* * * * *

Recently a Minorities Business Enterprises opened on the third floor of a certain building in the District of Columbia. It offers, among other things, a complete line of greeting cards. The Randolph-Sheppard vending stand on the first floor of the same building has carried a large selection of greeting cards for many years. The blind operator of the vending

stand sells about \$12,000 worth of greeting cards each year and is understandably upset over this situation. The General Services Administration is on record as having stated that Minorities Business Enterprises will not compete with Randolph-Sheppard vending stands. The Vocational Rehabilitation Administration of the District has entered the strongest possible complaint with GSA regarding this matter, considering it a clear violation of GSA's own policy of noncompetition with Randolph-Sheppard vendors. If more VRA offices throughout the country were to take similar forthright actions, perhaps GSA would learn. Perhaps it already has.

* * * * *

Although the NFB of Connecticut is still small, it is seeking out new blind persons and trying to present to them the necessity of stressing the positive attitudes toward blindness. Their Model White Cane Law has been passed by the Connecticut House of Representatives and is expected to be passed by the Senate. Also, after testimony by the NFB the State study commission has decided not to include the agency for the blind in its proposal for a State department of human services.

* * * * *

Rhode Island's Governor Noel has proposed a flat-grant welfare system for AFDC, with a payment level of about \$3500 a year for a family of four, but it has run into real opposition. Welfare officials are opposing the restoration of special needs, with its greater flexibility. This points up a real problem for the States when the Federal Government takes over the administration of the adult aids in January. The advantages of a decent

minimum amount of aid are obvious. However, there will be a need for the States to inject some flexibility into the system to take care of some special needs and emergencies.

* * * * *

A free correspondence course on amateur radio theory offered by the Hadley School for the Blind has become quite popular. It offers complete instruction in the fundamentals of radio electronics, in the management of an amateur station, and in the use of Morse code. Successful completion of the course should enable a student to qualify for a general class amateur radio operator's license. For more information write to: The Registrar, Hadley School for the Blind, 700 Elm Street, Winnetka, Illinois 60093.

* * * * *

The United Nations is undertaking an emergency campaign to save a generation from going blind in the new Nation of Bangladesh. It means giving every child under six a dose of high-potency vitamin A. It is estimated that 150,000 youngsters went blind in 1972 from malnutrition.

* * * * *

The Social Security program most affected by the budget proposal before the Congress is the Medicare program, both part A that assures hospital care for the aged, and part B that pays a portion of doctors' charges. The Administration is proposing a change in the way the beneficiaries' share of hospital care is computed. Now the beneficiary is required to pay the equivalent of one day's hospital stay. This figure has been rising and will be

seventy-two dollars after July 1 of this year. Under the proposal there would also be a larger deductible. The Administration is also planning to request that the Congress change the annual deductible under part B of Medicare. Currently the beneficiary is required to have paid sixty dollars in any one year before he may receive benefits from this part of the program. The proposal will be to relate the deductible to the income of the individual as measured by the amount of his cash benefit received. The coinsurance rate (currently twenty percent) would also be increased. These proposals are certain to generate considerable debate in the Congress since they would involve a payment of an additional one billion dollars each year by aged persons.

* * * * *

The annual convention of the West Virginia Federation of the Blind will be held in Wheeling, West Virginia, August 10, 11, and 12, 1973. The convention headquarters will be at the McClure House, Twelfth and Market Streets. Further information may be had from Mabel Griffith, convention chairman, 156 Columbia Avenue, Wheeling, West Virginia 26003.

The Sightless Workers Guild, an affiliate of the West Virginia Federation, will host the convention and cordially invites any Federationist to attend.

* * * * *

A new catalogue of Braille books from the library of the Jewish Guild for the Blind, 15 West Sixty-fifth Street, New York, New York 10023, is now ready for distribution. A wide selection of fiction,

nonfiction, and textbooks not generally attainable at other Braille libraries is available to Braille readers throughout the country. If you are interested in receiving the Braille catalogue, please state whether you wish the entire catalogue, or just the fiction, or nonfiction, sections.

* * * * *

The Potomac Chapter of the NFB of Virginia recently held chapter elections. The results are as follows: Alan Schlank, president; Naomi Thomas, first vice-president; Ruth Smith, second vice-president; Mary Lee West, recording secretary; Edna Dagwell, corresponding secretary; Marion McDonald, treasurer; and Robert Nace, Peggy Nagy, and Vinson Allen, board members.

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[The following short article is reprinted, with permission, from *Lions Sight* publication of the Idaho-Oregon Lions Sight Conservation Foundation. The article is a regular column, "From the President's Desk," and is written by Foundation President George Wehmann.]

On Sunday, August 13, I attended the thirty-seventh annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho, held in Idaho. I was there representing your Foundation, explaining its function and operation. During the question and answer period following my talk, we had an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and thoughts regarding our use of the white cane as a fundraising symbol.

Those in attendance at the convention were especially concerned that our use of the white cane in the spring would confuse

the general public, especially in light of the fact that each October 15 is declared "White Cane Day" nationally by the President. The origin and purpose of White Cane Day can be found in the October issue of "The Lion." To be sure, its origin involved Lions to help the blind. However, as was pointed out by members of the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho, our work has principally been in the prevention of blindness.

A number of others attending the convention cited their objections to our use of the white cane when going before the public to support the Foundation's programs. The exchange of ideas was genuine and stimulating.

Your president was most appreciative of this opportunity to exchange views. As a result, I informed the convention that as president, I would do whatever I could to correct the situation. I was greeted with considerable applause when I announced that in 1973 the Foundation will title its fund drive "Sight Conservation Week." I promised to see what we might be able to use as a symbol other than the white cane. The convention delegates appreciated the fact that we still had a considerable supply of white canes left from last year and did not insist that these not be used.

Your board is hard at work trying to come up with another pin to be given when receiving donations. The board has requested permission from Lions International to produce a plastic pin using the symbol for sight conservation work. Assuming permission is granted and the price is acceptable, the Foundation will use

these pins in the 1973 drive. At the same time, we hope we will be able to use up all the white canes.

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A news release from the Hadley School for the Blind: "Are you planning to go to college? 'College and You' is a free correspondence course on the techniques for achieving academic and personal success in college. Emphasizing the needs and questions of the individual, the course deals with a variety of topics, including study skills, vocabulary development, college goals, admissions procedures, and campus living. For information, write to: Registrar, Hadley School for the Blind, 700 Elm Street, Winnetka, Illinois 60093."

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On March 4, 1973, seven NFB members journeyed to Kirksville, Missouri, a town in the northeast part of the State, to organize another chapter for the State affiliate.

On arriving we found a very enthusiastic group ready to join the Federation movement. Cheryl Lewis, a young housewife who lost her sight a year ago, had laid the groundwork which helped considerably. The following officers were elected: Cheryl Lewis, president; Roland York, vice-president; Norine Read, secretary; Alice Miller, treasurer; Bill Martin, member-at-large.

Fourteen people joined the newly formed chapter, and several who were unable to attend the meeting are prospective members.

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